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The Story of the Nations.

HUNGARY

THE STORY OF THE NATIONS.

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HUNGARY

IN ANCIENT, MEDIÆVAL, AND MODERN TIMES

ARMINIUS VÁMBÉRY

PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BUDA-ESTH

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF

LOUIS HEILPRIN

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PREFACE.

IN complying with the request of the publisher of the *Nations* Series to write the Story of Hungary I undertook a task which was out of the range of my previous literary undertakings, which had for the most part been devoted to the geography, history, and philology of Central Asia. The principal reason which induced me to enter upon what is for me a new literary field, was my desire to make English readers acquainted with the record of my native country, and to present the various phases of the history of Hungary in the light best suited to attract the attention of the citizens of England, to whose opinion we Hungarians are by no means indifferent.

My willingness to prepare the present volume was further due to the fact, that it was not the *History*, but the *Story* of Hungary, I was asked to write; an undertaking in which I had simply to deal with the salient events, the most noteworthy personalities, and the most thrilling episodes in a narrative which covered nearly a thousand years, and was not called upon to consider the philosophical side of the history, or to discuss the deeper-lying motives or the less significant details of national action.

For a task such as that presented to me, I concluded that the knowledge and the ideas of a Hungarian man of letters were not inadequate; I have, nevertheless, had recourse, in certain instances, to the assistance of writers who had given special attention to our national history, with the idea of making as accurate as possible this *the first Story of Hungary written in English.*

The proof-reading has been entrusted to the care of Mr. Louis Heilprin, a gentlemen who is evidently thoroughly familiar with the subject, and to whom I desire to express my obligations not only for the care he has taken with the proof reading, but also for his attention in securing in my English text the most accurate and most effective forms of expression.

I take this opportunity of expressing, also, my thanks for the kind co-operation of my countrymen, Messrs. Sebestyén, Csánki, Acsády, and Vargha.

A. V.

BUDA-PESTH

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THE STORY OF HUNGARY.

CHAPTER I.

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE OF HUNGARY.

ALEXANDER PETÖFI, the great Hungarian poet, in one of his beautiful poems, sings thus of his native land:

> "If the earth be God's crown
> Our country is its fairest jewel."

And truly were we able to ascend the airy heights and obtain a bird's-eye view of Hungary, we would fain admit that it is one of the fairest and most blessed spots on the face of the earth.

In the Northwest of Hungary, on the banks of the Danube, begins the mountainous region known under the name of the Carpathian range, which for beauty is not surpassed by the Alps, and in extent fairly rivals them. This mountain range, encircling like a gigantic evergreen wreath one half of the country, extends all along its northern boundary and, after enclosing the eastern portion of it, stretches westward to where it is intersected by the waters of the Danube, not terminating there, however, but branch-

ing off into the countries lying along the lower course of that river.

The whole range of the Carpathians is characterized throughout its immensely long course by considerable breadth, forming at some places quite a hilly country and high plateaus, as, for instance, in Transylvania which, although properly belonging to Hungary, formerly enjoyed a sort of independence under its own name. This territory is covered almost entirely by the Carpathians, but of course, designated here by different names.

We shall proceed now in due order.

In the Northwest, there where the Danube enters Hungarian territory near Devény, the mountain chain begins, under the name of the Northwestern Carpathians, these describing the shape of a half moon extend from Pressburg (Pozsony) to the Hernad-Tarcza valley. Formerly three groups only were mentioned in connection with this section, namely, the Tatra, Fatra, and Matra, a representation of which, as well as of the four rivers, the Danube, Theiss, Drave, and Save, is embodied in the arms of the country, whence Hungary is designated as 'the country of the three mountains and four rivers.' The Northwestern Carpathians are, however, a gigantic mountain mass of immense bulk, subdivided into several distinct ranges. Of these one, the Northwestern border mountain-range, starting near the Danube in Pressburg County and extending in the shape of a wide arch in a northeastern direction as far as the sources of the Árva river, divides Hungary from Moravia, Silesia, and Galicia.

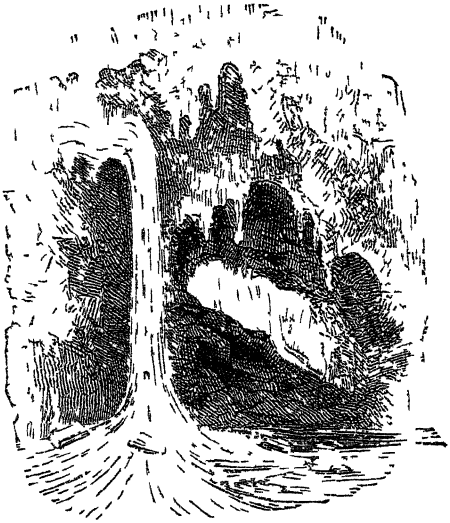
DANUBE FROM THE RUINS OF VISEGRÁD

This ridge is constantly rising, and reaches the highest elevation at its northern edge. Another range is the Little Kreván, which begins in Arva County, and extends through the flatlands between the Vág and Nyitra rivers. East of this are the Gomor mountain-range, famous for its stalactitic caves, including Aggtelek; the Mátra range, extending from Miskolcz to Vácz; and the loftiest of all, the High Tátra, whose highest peaks are those of Jégvolgy, Gerlachfalva, and Lomnicz, rising to an altitude of between 8,000 and 9,000 feet. The mountains belonging to this group are snow-covered, and what renders them peculiarly interesting are the so-called *tengerszemek* (eyes of the sea), limpid lakes of unfathomable depth, which, according to popular belief, are connected with the sea, and about which a good many old-time legendary tales are current amongst the people. These lakes are met with at the height of 1,900 metres above the level of the sea.

That range of mountains which extends eastward from the Hernád-Tarcza valley to the southeastern angle of Mármaros County is called the Northeastern Carpathians. It includes the Wooded Carpathians and the Eperjes-Tokay range, in the southern part of which, the Hegyalja, the king of the wines, the famous Tokay wine, is produced.

The southeastern chain of the Carpathians divides where Mármaros County, Transylvania, and Bukovina converge into an angle, forming several main lines which enclose the territory of Transylvania in an almost quadrangular shape and give it the character of a high plateau. The name of this group

is the Southeastern Carpathians. Parts of it are the Transylvanian northern and eastern border ranges; the Hargita range, with the remarkable Mount Budos, containing several caves from which issue strong gases, and the beautiful lake of St. Anna at a height of 950 metres; the southern border range, the largest and most massive portion of the Carpathian



ICE-GROTTO OF DEMÄNYHALVA.

mountains; the mountain group of the Banate and the mineral mountain range of the Banate, the latter owing its name to the gold, silver, and other ores as well as the coal abounding in it. This group projects as far as the basin of the Danube and forms there the passes known as the Iron Gate, which greatly impede navigation. To the Transylvanian

Hungarian range, extending north from the Maros river, belong the mineral mountains of Transylvania, rich in gold and other ore, and the mountain called Királyhágó, which marks the frontier between Hungary and the independent Transylvania of old.

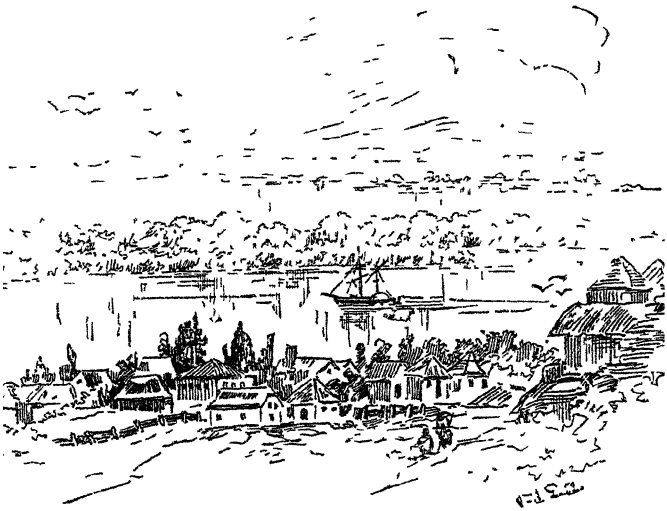
Thirty-eight passes lead from this mountain-system of gigantic dimensions, partly into the countries adjacent to Hungary, partly into the regions divided by them. Of these the most important are: the Jablunka pass, communicating with Silesia and the valley of the Vistula; the Vereczke pass between Munkács and Stry, supposed to be the pass through which the Hungarians entered their present country; the Radna pass, leading into Bukovina; the Ojtóz pass, communicating with Moldavia; the Tomos pass, leading to Bucharest; and the Red Tower pass, leading into Little Wallachia.

Besides the Carpathian mountains Hungary also contains a less considerable portion of the Alps, belonging to the so-called Noric Alps. They lie in trans-Danubian Hungary, the Pannonia of old. They embrace the Austro-Styrian border-range, between the valleys of the Danube and Drave; the Vértes-Bakony ranges, of which the Bakony forest forms a part; and the group of the Buda mountains, producing the celebrated wines of that name.

Croatia and Slavonia, which are parts of the Hungarian realm, are also traversed by mountains belonging to the Alpine system.

We perceive from the preceding account that a large portion of the country is mountainous, but over a third part of it is level land, and so fertile

that it may compare to the prairies in North America. The great Hungarian plain, the so-called Altold (Lowland), boasts of the best soil for the production of wheat, and, stretching down from the offshoots of the Central Carpathians to the frontiers of Servia contains upward of 35,000 square miles.



BORDERS OF THE DANUBE.

The extent of the water system of a country and its distribution is always of the first importance. In this respect, too, Hungary has been blessed by nature. Of the sea she has but little; a small portion only of the Adriatic washes her shores, the so-called Hungarian Sea-Coast, where Fiume, the only important Hungarian seaport city, is situated. The country possesses also some interesting lakes; one, Lake Balaton,

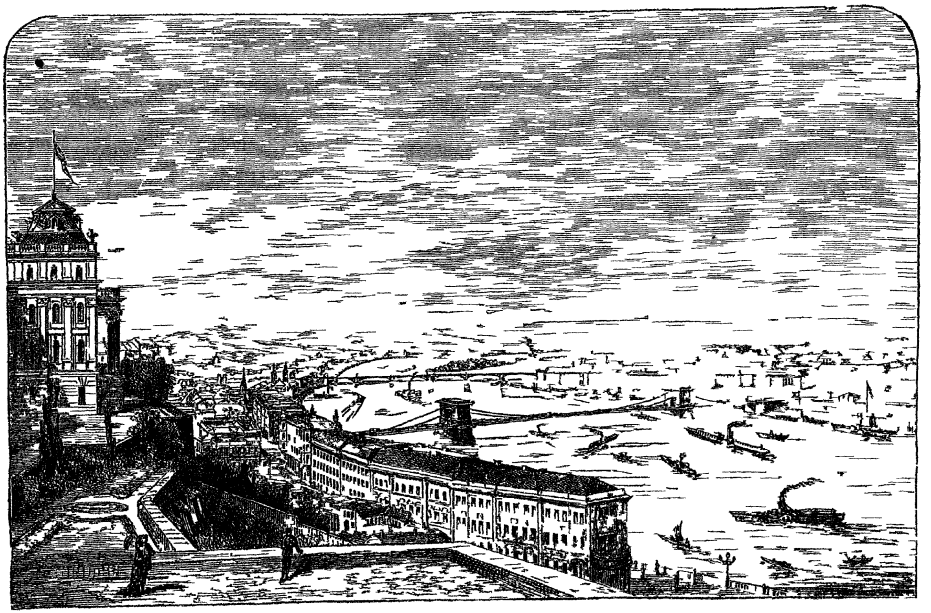
forty-seven miles long and nine miles wide, has the characteristics of the sea to such an extent that it is called the Hungarian Sea. In this extensive water is to be found the savory *fogas* fish, and on its shores is situated Balaton-Füred, one of the favorite watering-places of Hungary, and near this place is the famous echo of Tihany. Another large lake is the Fertö (Neu-Siedler), eighteen miles long and about five miles wide, which became perfectly dry in 1863, so that even houses were built on its bed, but the waters have returned to it within the last few years. Several smaller lakes, besides the two mentioned, are scattered throughout the country.

With rivers the country is abundantly supplied. Its mightiest stream is the Danube, after the Volga, the largest river in Europe. The whole of Hungary belongs to its basin. Its length in Hungary is 600 miles, and it leaves the country at Orsova, after having formed several islands in its course. The largest among these is the Great Csalló region, which contains two towns and over a hundred villages; and the most beautiful of them is Margit (Margaret) Island, near Buda-Pesth—quite a miniature paradise, frequented by a great many strangers, who come here to get the benefit of its excellent baths. Of the numerous affluents of the Danube the Theiss is the most important; it has its sources in the country and empties into the Danube on Hungarian soil, near Titel. It is navigable for steamships. The Save and Drave are after the Theiss the largest tributaries of the Danube. All these rivers send their waters, through the medium of the Danube, into the Black Sea.

Thus harmoniously is the soil of Hungary varied by mountains, valleys, plains, and high plateaus, and gratefully watered by rivers and lakes; and if we but add that the country lies between the forty-fourth and fiftieth degrees of northern latitude, that is, in the most favorable part of the temperate zone, we may readily infer the superiority of the climatic conditions prevailing there. There is, of course, great variety of climate. The winter is raw and cold in the Carpathian regions; spring sets in later, winter comes earlier, and the cold sometimes reaches —22° F. In the hilly and level country the climate is much more genial, the summers hotter, and storms of more frequent occurrence. Wheat, grapes, and maize do not ripen in the regions of the higher Carpathians, whilst the Alföld produces the best and finest wheat, and even rice. The air is most genial on the shores of the Adriatic, and here are grown the fruits of Southern Europe. The climate, as a general thing, is dry, especially in the Alföld, where trees are rare.

Such is the topography and climate of the country which, lying in the central portion of Middle Europe, stretches between Moravia, Silesia, Galicia, Bukovina, Roumania, Servia, Bosnia, the Adriatic Sea, Istria, Carinthia, Styria, and Austria. It covers an area of 125,000 square miles, and has a population of nearly sixteen millions.

Politically the country is divided into three parts, namely: Hungary proper (including the formerly detached Transylvania), the city and territory of Fiume, and Croatia and Slavonia. Dalmatia, too, ought to belong under the old laws to the country,



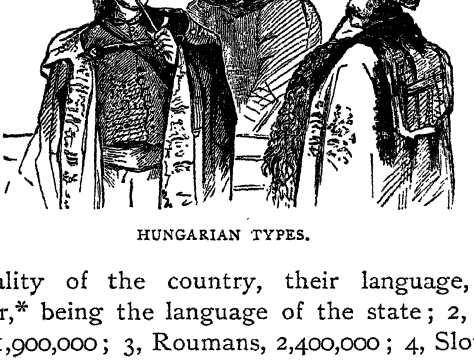
Grosswardein (Nagy-Várad), the scene of many important historical events; Arad, Temesvár, and Carlsburg (Gyulafejérvár), all fortified cities memorable in history; Klausenburg (Kolozsvár), the capital of the former principality of Transylvania; the flourishing Transylvanian towns of Kronstadt (Brassó) and Hermannstadt (Szeben), inhabited for the

COACHMAN.

most part by the descendants of Saxons; Fiume, the seaport on the Adriatic; Agram (Zágráb), the capital of Croatia, a beautiful city, which, however, was greatly damaged in 1880 by a terrible earthquake; and Eszék, the most prominent of the Slavonian towns.

The population of the country is composed of various nationalities. The conquering Hungarians did not oppress the ancient inhabitants of the land but

left them undisturbed in the use of their native language, and, even in later days, their tolerance went so far as to actually favor foreign, and, more particularly, German immigrants, and to this exceptional forbearance alone must be traced the survival of so many nationalities, and the lack of assimilation, after so many centuries. Classified as to languages spoken by the inhabitants, the chief nationalities number as follows: 1, Hungarians or Magyars, 6,500,000—the ruling, and, so to say, the political



HUNGARIAN TYPES.

nationality of the country, their language, the Magyar,* being the language of the state; 2, Germans, 1,900,000; 3, Roumans, 2,400,000; 4, Slovaks,

* The language of the Hungarians, or Magyars, belongs to the Uralo-Altaic stock, and must be classified with those mixed languages which have sprung up from the amalgamation of different branches of the said race. In the case of the Hungarian language we have before us a mixture of the Finnic-Ugrian and the Turco-Tartar idioms, and the question of its fundamental basis has been constantly a matter of dispute between philologists.

Its phonetic system, as a strictly Asiatic language, being essentially

1,800,000; 5, Croats and Serbs, 2,400,000; Ruthenes, 350,000. Besides these there are other nationalities but in insignificant numbers.

The relative numbers of the various religious denominations are, in round figures, as follows: Roman and Greek (united) Catholics 60%; Eastern-Greek (non-united), 16%; Lutherans, 7%; Calvinists, 13%; Unitarians, ½%; Jews, 4%.

With respect to their cultural condition, the people may be said to be abreast with the nations of Western Europe in every thing but industry, commerce, and some branches of science. In recent years especially a great improvement has taken place in popular education, owing to the large and daily increasing number of schools, and the law which compels children to attend school. There are, for the purpose of advancing learning and cultivating the various branches of science, a variety of conspicuous scientific institutions, literary societies, reading clubs, and public and private libraries. In journalistic literature the country is equal to any country on the European continent.

different from that of the Indo-European or Aryan languages, we give here the following rules of pronunciation to be used in this book:

VOWELS:

Hungarian.	*English, etc.*
a	o in hot.
á	a in far.
e	e in net.
é	ai in fail.
i	i in pin.
í	ee in deer.
ó	o in no.
ö	eu in French meuble.
ő	eu in French deux.
u	u in full.
ú	oo in too.
ü	u in French juste.
ü	u in French dur.

CONSONANTS:

Hungarian.	*English, etc.*
cs	ch in chalk.
cz	ts in charts.
gy	dy in how d' you do.
ly	gl in Italian gli.
ny	gn in Italian ogni.
s	sh in shirt.
sz	s in saint.
ty	ty in hit you (tu in tune).
zs	s in pleasure.

CHILDREN FROM THE DISTRICT OF THE SAVE.

The constitution of the kingdom is one of the most liberal in Europe. The estates were represented at the Diet up to 1848, but under the present constitution the government is based upon popular representation. The Parliament or National Assembly consists of two Houses, the House of Representatives and the Upper House, or House of Lords, and in these two bodies and the king is vested the legislative power. The national affairs are administered by eight ministerial departments; the affairs in common with Austria are settled by a delegation from the two Houses of Parliament which meets an Austrian Parliamentary delegation once in every year, and administered by three common ministerial departments—for foreign affairs, for the common army, and for the finances, respectively.

In conclusion it may be added that the description given above of the favorable concurrence of soil and climate is fully borne out by the abundance of fine cattle of every description possessed by the country, by a bountiful production of cereals which has earned for Hungary the name of the granary of Europe, by the growth of the greatest variety of fruit and forest trees, and finally by the rich products of the mining regions we have adverted to before.

This chapter, however, would be incomplete were we not to mention the gigantic efforts made by the national government in every direction during the last two decades to raise Hungary from a mere agricultural state to an industrial and commercial state as well, by fostering her domestic industries and providing good highways, a fine net of railways,

SELF-IMMOLATION OF SZONDI. (See p. 301.)

steam and other navigation, in order to afford an easy and cheap outlet to the abundance of natural products with which nature has blessed her.

These patriotic efforts, considering the short space of time they cover, have been attended with signal success, and have culminated in the National Exhibition of 1885, held at Buda-Pesth, which fitly illustrated to its many visitors, amounting to nearly a million, the extraordinary progress made by the country in the last years.

1 "KOLA."

CHAPTER II.

HUNGARY BEFORE THE OCCUPATION BY THE MAGYARS.

THE historic period of Hungary begins, properly speaking, with the first century before our era, when Pannonia, comprising the regions watered by the Danube and Drave, was conquered by the victorious arms of Rome. Prehistoric traces, however, may be met with in abundance, which, with the aid of archæological inquiry, indicate that the soil of Hungary was already inhabited in the neolithic age and in that of bronze by populations who, judged by the mementoes left behind them, which were unearthed by the present generation, must have stood on the same level of civilization as the rest of Europe at those periods. Certain articles dating from the age of bronze show even such marked national peculiarities as to lead to the supposition that the heterogeneous tribes were all under the influence of one kind of culture. The Pannonians, after a protracted struggle, were subjugated by Tiberius, the stepson of the emperor Augustus. One of the art gems of antiquity, the so-called *Apotheosis of Augustus*, to be seen in the museum of antiquities at Vienna, commemorates the triumph of Tiberius. The con-

ROMAN AND DACIANS, FROM TRAJAN'S COLUMN.

quering general is represented as stepping from his chariot to do homage to Augustus and Livia, who are seated on a throne in godlike forms. Below, Roman soldiers are raising trophies, whilst the conquered leader is sitting on the ground with his arms tied behind his back. The reduction of the Dacians, to whose realm Transylvania belonged, took place under Trajan, a century later. To this day stands in Rome the pillar of Trajan, erected in memory of his successful campaign in Dacia.

In Trajan's time already Pannonia differed in no wise from the other Roman provinces. Under a Roman administration the language of Rome soon gained ground, although the legions placed there were by no means Roman or even Italian, but consisted for the most part of Romanized Spaniards, Belgians, Britons, and inhabitants of the Alpine provinces. The towns became municipalities and colonies, and their inhabitants enjoyed the privilege of self-government conceded to every Roman citizen. Dacia, too, became, under that name, a Roman province, and the Romanizing process was no less rapid there than it had been in Pannonia. The blessings of Roman civilization followed, as usual, in the train of Roman conquests. Cities soon sprang up in the newly organized provinces, and were connected with each other as well as with Rome by fine highways, traces of which may be met with here and there to this day. The cultivation of the vine was introduced under Roman rule, and the regular working of the gold and salt mines of Transylvania began at that period. The life in the prov-

inces was modelled after the Roman pattern, for the Roman brought with him his customs, institutions, language, and mode of life. The newly built cities boasted of public places, of amphitheatres, of public baths, the resort of pleasure-seekers and idlers; nor was the forum with its

A ROMAN TEMPLE.

statues wanting. The border towns had their *castrum*, giving them a peculiar character of their own.

For four centuries these provinces shared the destinies of the Roman empire. The enemies of Rome were their enemies, too, and when, under the emperor Marcus Aurelius, in the latter part of the second century of our era, the German nations combined in an attack on the Romans, the Marcomanni, who were renowned for their savage bravery, made a

successful inroad into Pannonia, and crossing the Danube devastated the whole land. Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, was satisfied to maintain only the integrity of the vast possessions he inherited, and was averse to new conquests in the direction of the Carpathians. His policy was to protect and defend the natural boundary line formed by the Danube, a policy which gave the legions located there an undue prominence. From this time forth Rome had to be defended in Pannonia, for already at that period the mighty revolution, called the migration of nations—the pressing forward of populations from the North and East toward the civilized West and South—began to be felt. It was quite natural that the Pannonian legions should, under the circumstances, become aware of the importance of their position, and undertake to direct the destinies of Rome from that distant province. Roman history records that it was by the proclamation of these legions that Septimius Severus, Maximin, and Aurelian became emperors. The emperors Claudius II., Probus, and Valentinian I. were of Pannonian origin. The infant son of the latter, Valentinian II., was brought by the widowed empress Justina into the camp, and there the legions swore allegiance to him.

The time was now approaching when the waning power of the Roman empire became more and more unequal to the task of defending her provinces. Aurelian already had withdrawn the Roman legions from Dacia and allowed the Goths to settle there, and Probus had introduced the Goths into

Lower Pannonia. Roman influence and Roman protection began to be of little value; the great empire, weakened by internal dissensions, by the internecine wars waged against each other by imperial pretenders, torn by religious disputes, and finally divided, hastened to its downfall.

At this period a new people made its appearance in Europe on the shores of the Black Sea and along the banks of the Danube, namely, the Huns, who were pushing before them the Goths towards the West. They differed in race from the Germans, Slavs, and Romans, and they had in Attila a leader capable of uniting under his sway the most discordant ethnical elements. Ostrogoths, Gepidæ, Vandals, Alans, Rugians, mostly Germanic populations, followed the banners of the foreign leader, trusting in his good fortune and awed and magnetized by his great personal qualities. He pushed forward with an immense number of followers, gathering strength as he advanced by the accession of the barbarous nations, bearing down and destroying every thing before him. Theodosius II., Emperor of the East, agreed to pay tribute to the king of the Huns; but in order to disguise to his subjects the disgraceful transaction, he appointed Attila a general of the empire, so that the tribute should have the appearance of official pay. But Attila was not satisfied with this, and broke the peace, overran the Balkan peninsula, pillaged the Byzantine provinces, and destroyed the cities until he obtained his own terms. Priscus Rhetor, who was one of the embassy sent by Theodosius II. to the court of

Attila, describes the wooden structure in which the king of the Huns dwelt on the banks of the Theiss, somewhere in the vicinity of Szeged, and the feasting there. Kings sat at the table, lords sang Attila's heroic deeds, and the guests drank each other's health from vessels of gold. Heathen and Christian, Roman citizens and Asiatic barbarians, as well as the representatives of the Germanic tribes, mixed with each other and thronged his court. It was during one of those feasts, in 453, as he was celebrating his nuptials, that the mighty king of the Huns was carried off by a fit of apoplexy. Whilst the sons of Attila were contending with each other for the possession of the empire, the Germanic populations fell upon the divided Huns and drove them back to the Black Sea.

The Gepidæ remained now the masters of the country east of the Danube, whilst the Ostrogoths occupied the ancient Roman province. The latter, however, under the lead of their king Theodoric, migrated in a body to Italy, crossing the Alps, and founded there, on the ruins of the Roman empire, a Gothic kingdom. The Gepidæ remained in consequence the sole ruling people in Hungary; but as they proved dangerous neighbors to the Eastern empire, Justinian invited the Longobards to settle in Pannonia, and gave to the Avars, who now made their first appearance in Europe and had asked him for land to settle on, the left bank of the lower Danube. About this time, too, Slavic populations came into the country, crossing the Carpathian mountains and peopling the deserted land. Gepidæ, Longobards,

and Avars could not dwell long in peace together, and the first collision took place between the Longobards and the Gepidæ on the banks of the Danube. This was followed by another hostile outbreak, in which the Longobards obtained the alliance of the Avars against the Gepidæ, resulting in the total overthrow of the latter. Shortly afterwards the Longobards, following an invitation from Italy, emigrated thither. Thus the Avars were left in sole possession of the country, ruling over populations chiefly Slavic. The empire they founded lasted two centuries and a half. The Avars were partly remnants of those Huns who had been the terror of Europe, and their numbers were in part swelled by new recruits coming from Asia.

Baján was the first and most dreaded prince of the Avars. During his reign of thirty-two years the Byzantine emperor was compelled to conciliate the warlike humor of the Avar prince by an annual tribute of splendid presents, which, however, did not prevent the latter from undertaking pillaging expeditions, on more than one occasion, into Thrace, Mœsia, and Macedonia. Although a warlike people the Avars seemed to lack the necessary skill and experience for besieging and capturing fortified places. Their rule was characterized by cruelty, want of faith, and destructive propensities. In course of time they became more inclined to peace; wealth, indulgence in wine, and commerce having rendered them effeminate and less formidable. They were finally conquered, towards the end of the eighth century, by Charlemagne and his Franks, who car-

ried on against them for seven years one of the most cruel and desolating wars known to history. Charlemagne's own historiographer tells us that one might have travelled through the entire land for months, after the termination of the war, without meeting with a single house—so utter and terrible were the ruin and destruction. The downfall of the Avars was irretrievable.

The rule of the Romans had lasted four hundred years in Pannonia; the Huns, Ostrogoths, Gepidæ, and Longobards enjoyed a span of power of a little over a century taking them altogether, whilst the Avars maintained their supremacy for two hundred and fifty years.

A century after their downfall appeared on the scene the Magyars, who founded an empire which still endures, having survived the storms of a thousand years.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORIGIN OF THE HUNGARIANS.

THE story of the origin of the Hungarians is generally derived from two different sources. One, purely mythical or legendary, is said to have come down from the forefathers to the present generation, and, clad in a somewhat fanciful garb, runs as follows:

Nimrod, the man of gigantic stature, a descendant of Japheth, one of the sons of Noah, migrated after the confusion of languages at the building of the tower of Babel to the land of Havila. There his wife, Eneh, bore him two sons, Hunyor and Magyar. One day as the two brothers were out hunting in the forests of the Caucasus, they happened to fall in with a doe. They at once gave chase, but on reaching the moorlands of the Sea of Azov the noble animal suddenly vanished before their very eyes. The brothers, in pursuing the track of their game, had wandered through a wide expanse of country, and perceiving that the rich meadows were admirably suited to the needs of a pastoral people, they immediately returned to their father and asked his consent to their departure. They obtained his consent without difficulty, and settled with their herds of cattle in those regions where grass grew luxuriantly.

The two brothers had lived quietly for five years in their new homes, when the thought occurred to them, more thoroughly to investigate the surrounding country. They accordingly set out on their journey, roaming along the steppes, when their ears were suddenly caught by the sounds of voices singing, which the east wind had wafted in their direction. Led on by the pleasing sounds the wanderers' eyes were met by a lovely sight. Before them the daughters of the dwellers in the woods were disporting themselves beneath their tents, celebrating the Feast of the Hunting-horn, in the absence of their husbands and brothers. Hunyor and Magyar were delighted at this unexpected encounter and quickly carried away the women to their own abode. Amongst the ravished women were two maids of rare beauty, the daughters of Dula, the prince of the Alans. Hunyor took one, and Magyar the other, for his spouse. From them sprang the kindred nations of the Huns and Magyars, or Hungarians, both of which in due course of time, grew to be mighty.

After the lapse of many years the descendants of the two brothers had increased to such an extent that the territory they dwelt in proved too small to support them all. North of their homes lay blessed Scythia, bounded on the east by the Ural mountains, on the southeast by the sandsteppes, rich in salt, and the Caspian Sea, and on the south by the Don river. After having thoroughly reconnoitred this country they drove out the inhabitants, one portion of the people spreading over their newly acquired home and taking possession of it, whilst the remain-

ing portion continued to occupy their former country. The progeny of Hunyor settled in the northeastern part of the country beyond the Volga, whilst the descendants of Magyar, pushing upwards along the Don, pitched their tents on the left bank of the river. The latter were afterwards known by the name of the Don-Magyars, and their country by that of Dontumogeria—that is, the Don Magyar-land.

In proportion as the two kindred races increased and came in contact with various other nations, they began to differ from each other more and more widely in their ways and manners. The Huns being more exposed to the attacks of the roving populations than the Magyars, who were protected by the Caspian Sea and endless steppes, became, in consequence, more warlike, and adopted ruder manners. Twenty-two generations had passed away since the death of the two brothers, who had been the founders of their nations, when for reasons unknown the Huns resolved to emigrate from their country. Whilst the Magyars continued to dwell quietly along the Don, the Huns proceeded with an immense army, each tribe contributing ten thousand men, against Western Europe, conquering and rendering tributary, in the course of their wanderings, numerous nations, and finally settled in the region of the Theiss and Danube. Later on, however, in the middle of the fifth century, when the world-renowned Attila, "the scourge of God," came into power, the Huns carried their victorious arms over a great part of the western world.

The immense empire, however, which had been founded by King Attila, was destined to be but of short duration after the death of its founder. His sons Aladar and Csaba, in their contention for the inheritance, resorted to arms. The war ended with the utter destruction of the nation. All of the followers of Aladar perished; Csaba, however, succeeded in escaping from the destroying arms of the neighboring nations who had fallen on the quarrelling brothers, with but about fifteen thousand men to the territories of the Greek empire. A few thousands, who had deserted Csaba, fled to Transylvania, and settled there in the eastern mountain-regions. The descendants of the latter became subsequently merged with the immigrating Hungarians, and formed with them a homogeneous family under the name of Szeklers, which continues to exist to this day. Csaba, whose mother was an imperial daughter of Greece, met with a friendly reception at the hands of the Greek emperor, Marcianus, and remained in that country for a few years. He returned afterwards with the remainder of his people to the home of his ancestors, on the banks of the Don, where, up to the time of his death, he never tired of inciting the Magyars to emigrate to Pannonia and to revenge themselves on their enemies by reconquering the empire of Attila.

In turning to the second source of the history of the origin of the Hungarians, we are treading upon the firmer ground of scientific inquiry; we can penetrate the hazy light of remote antiquity, and venture the assertion that it is far away in the dis-

HUNGARIAN SHEPHERD.

tant East—namely, in the Altai mountains, that we may look for the cradle of the Magyar race. Here was, as the reader may be aware, the coterminous frontier of the three principal branches of the Uralo-Altaic race—namely, the Mongolians in the east, the Finn-Ugrians in the north, and the Turks in the south. With a population of strictly nomadic habits and of eminently roaming propensities, it needs scarcely to be said that the three branches lived in continual feud and warfare near each other. A great convulsion in the life of these nomads happened, as we presume, in the second or third century after Christ. The Turks, on seeing the more flourishing state of things with their Finn-Ugrian neighbors in the north, fell upon them suddenly, drove them from their homes in the valleys of the Altai mountains, where traces of their industry are still extant, and scattered the various tribes and families, partly to the north—namely, to Siberia; partly to the west—namely, to Southern Russia.

From that extraordinary throng and revolutionary migration emerged the Voguls and Ostyaks, who live at this day on both sides of the great Obi river; the Zyrians, who now live in the governments of Archangel and Vologda; farther the Votyaks and Tcheremisses, a motley crowd of men who are of Finn-Ugrian extraction, but strongly intermixed with Turco-Tartar blood.

Now, of similar origin are the Hungarians, with this difference, that with them the Turco-Tartar origin forms the basis of their ethnical character, and that the Finn-Ugrians who amalgamated with

them afterward, being a subjugated population, remained always in a moral inferiority, although they greatly influenced the governing class. We do not know precisely whether the amalgamation took place in the valleys of the Altai, or farther west on the Volga, at some later period, nor can we form an accurate idea as to the part the Hungarians took in the irruption of the Huns, with which event they are associated in national tradition. The Huns were unquestionably Turks by extraction. Their mode of warfare, their religion, and social life present full evidence of this, and admitting that they had in their ranks either pure Finn-Ugrian elements or portions of the above-mentioned amalgamated populations, we may fairly claim that the ancestors of the Hungarians took part in the great devastating campaigns which Attila carried on against Rome and the Christian West as far as France. In this sense, the claim of the Hungarians to descent from the Huns is fully justified. But, as the plan of this work excludes the discussion of questions wrapped in the clouds of scientific speculations we will turn to that portion of the history of the Hungarians which is cleared up by historical evidence, and will begin with the ninth century, when they emerged from the banks of the Volga and began their march toward the West, a march which resulted in their occupation of Hungary.

Before entering into the details of the march of the Magyars towards their present home, we must try to sketch as briefly as possible the geographical and ethnographical conditions of the country between the Volga and the Danube in the ninth

century. It must be borne in mind that at that time the Russians were in a considerable minority in those regions. East of the Volga, as far as the Ural River, and even beyond, roamed various tribes of the vast Turkish race, amongst whom the Petchenegs occupied the foremost rank. On the lower course of the Volga and further west, lived the Khazars, a Turkish tribe of advanced culture, who carried on a flourishing trade on the Caspian and Black seas, and had embraced the Jewish religion. These Khazars were the mightiest of the Turkish races of that time, and their wars with Persia and with the rising Mohammedan power became of historic importance. Westward of the Khazars dwelt another fraction of the Petchenegs, the frontiers of whose country extended across Moldavia to the borders of Transylvania, whilst the Magyars or Hungarians, who had occupied a country called Lebedia, were compelled by the Petchenegs to emigrate to Etelkuzu, not remaining there, however, for any great length of time. In fact the whole of Southern Russia of today was teeming, during the ninth century, with nomadic populations. These pressed upon each other in the search for pasture grounds for their numerous cattle. There is a great likelihood that the fame of the rich plains of Hungary had remained in the memory of the Magyars from the time when their forefathers fought under the banners of Attila. Suffice it to say that, compelled by circumstances, they made up their minds to go westward, and the seven dukes who stood at that time at the head of the nation, and whose names were Álmos, Elöd,

35 ELECTION OF ÁLMOS, THE FIRST DUKE.

Kund, Huba, Tas, Und, and Tuhutum, united in a solemn league and covenant, and putting Álmos, as the oldest amongst them, at their head, they sealed that union with the old Turkish form of oath, by drinking each of the blood of all, obtained by cutting open the veins of their arms. This form of oath was for a long time a custom in Hungary. The union of the Hungarians was based upon the following five conditions:

1. As long as they and their progeny after them shall live, their duke and ruler shall be always taken from the house of Álmos.

2. Whatever should be acquired by the united strength of all must benefit all those who belonged to them.

3. The chiefs of the people having voluntarily elected Álmos for their ruler, they and their descendants shall always take part in the councils of the prince, and shall have their share in the honors of the empire.

4. Whenever any of their descendants shall be found wanting in the fidelity due to the prince, or shall foment dissensions between him and his kindred, the blood of the guilty one shall be shed even as theirs was flowing when they gave their oaths of fidelity to Álmos.

5. Should a successor of Álmos affend against this oath and covenant of the fathers, then might the curse rest on him.

We have no accurate information concerning the number of Hungarian warriors and of their retinues who entered Hungary towards the end of the ninth

century, nor can we point out those localities on the eastern frontier of the country through which the entrance was effected. As to the numbers, we do not go amiss if we assume that no more than one hundred and fifty thousand fighting men formed the main body of the invaders. Their ranks were swelled partly by Russians who followed in their track, partly by Avars, a kindred Turkish population, whom they found in the country itself, and by Khazars, who, preceding the Hungarians, were leading a nomadic life on the steppe. Regarding the country itself, it must be borne in mind that in those days it was very thinly populated, and the ethnical conditions were somewhat as follows: In the west there were Slovenes and Germans; in the north, namely, in the Carpathian mountains, lived the compact mass of the Slovaks, whose sway extended down to the banks of the Theiss. The country between that river and the Danube belonged to the Bulgarian prince, Zalán, whilst the region on the left bank of the Theiss, as far as the river Szamos, was in the possession of Marót, the prince of the Khazars. The conquest of Hungary was evidently a task of no great difficulty for a warlike nation like the Hungarians, whose strange physiognomy and superior weapons, brought from the Caucasus, struck terror, at the very outset, into the breasts of the inhabitants. The invaders appeared with their small, sturdy, and hardy horses, quick as lightning and strong as iron. Their mode of warfare was strictly Asiatic, similar to that used to this day by the Turcomans, and they were animated precisely by the same spirit

which led the Mongolians, under Jenghis Khan, over the whole of Asia and a large portion of Europe. With all this, they could not be called barbarians or savages, when their social and political institutions were compared with those of the inhabitants they subjugated in Hungary. It was the culture of Persia which extended at that time up to the banks of the Volga, penetrating the minds of the motley populations living there, and traces of this culture are clearly to be discovered in the acts of the leading persons amongst the conquering Hungarians. As soon as the Hungarians had taken possession of their present country, under the leadership of Árpád, it became their chief care to give a certain stability to their internal affairs. Scattered over the extensive territory, they more particularly endeavored to bring order into their relations with the former inhabitants. Those only who refused to lay down their arms felt the weight of the conquerors; whilst they reciprocated the friendship and confidence shown to them by others. Thus it happened that many of the ancient inhabitants were adopted by them for their own countrymen, and that, having entered into a treaty of amity with Marót, a treaty made firmer by the betrothal of Árpád's youngest son, Zoltán, with Marót's daughter, the territory of Bihar was added to Hungary after the death of Marót. According to the fashion of the Scythian populations, they disturbed no one in his faith, nor did they interfere with any one's mode of worship. Nomads as they were, they knew how to appreciate what was still left of the ancient culture in their new country, and they

fostered the colonial places still surviving from the Roman period, the cradles of the future city life of Hungary.

There is an account in the history of the Hungarians how the different portions of the invading army spread over the country, what battles they fought, what alliances they entered into with the reigning princes, but the account is based merely upon legendary tradition. We are sadly in want of details about that most interesting epoch, and supported by historical authority we can only state that Leo the Wise, the emperor of Byzantium, asked the military assistance of the Hungarians against the Bulgarians, and that it was the sword of the valiant nomadic warriors which averted a threatening calamity from Constantinople. It is likewise certain that Arnulph, King of Germany, encouraged by the military reputation of the Magyars, asked their assistance against Svatopluk, King of Moravia, and that their first appearance in the country is connected with this occurrence.

The conquest of Hungary occupied the period between 884 and 895.

Within this time falls the utter defeat and tragic end of Svatopluk, the most powerful native prince with whom the Hungarians had to contend. Arnulph had already engaged him in battle when the Hungarians came to the succor of the former. Their timely arrival decided the fate of the battle, which resulted in the complete rout and scattering of the Moravians. Svatopluk, is said to have done wonders of heroism during the battle, but after its fatal

termination he could nowhere be found. In vain was the bloody field searched for the body of the unfortunate leader, nor were the messengers sent out to remoter regions to obtain news of him more successful in their quest. Hungarian tradition has it that in his rage and despair at the loss of the battle, he rushed into the Danube, and met there with a watery grave. Slavic tradition, however, represents the matter in a manner more in keeping with the character and reckless disposition of this strange barbarian, who knew but unbridled passions and sudden resolutions formed on the spur of the moment. According to these traditions, Svatopluk, seeing that his fortunes were hopelessly wrecked, mounted a steed and, leaving the battle-field, swiftly rode away into the fastnesses of the interminable forests covering the Zobor mountain, which overlooks in massive grandeur towards the east and south the town and castle of Nyitra, and was then lost to sight. Here in a secluded valley, amidst rocks, and protected by pathless woods, lived three hermits. These holy men passed their lives in offering up prayers to God in a chapel constructed by their own hands, and, entirely absorbed by their pious exercises, they knew no other nourishment but herbs and the fruit growing wild. These men, who did not visit the neighboring cities, had never seen Svatopluk, and this was the very reason that brought the king of the Moravians to their hermitage. As he reached late in the night a place where the forest was densest, he dismounted, killed his horse, and, together with his royal mantle and crown, buried it in a ditch, and covered

up the place of burial with earth and leaves. He then tore his garments and soiled them with mud, and in this guise, pretending to be a beggar, he came to the three hermits and told them that, moved by the Holy Spirit, he desired to pass his life with them. He was cordially received by the hermits and lived amongst them a great many years unknown, praying as they did, partaking of the same food they ate, and like them dead to all the memories of the outside world. In his last moments only he told them his real name, and the hermits, in their childlike astonishment at this incredulous adventure, placed the following inscription on his tombstone: "Here rests Svatopluk, the king of Moravia, buried in the centre of his kingdom."

CHAPTER IV.

THE REIGN OF THE DUKES

ÁRPÁD, called by the Greek writers Arpadis, was the first ruler of Hungary, who laid the foundations of the present kingdom, and whose statesmanlike sagacity may well excite admiration, considering that under his lead a strictly Asiatic nation succeeded in penetrating into the very interior of Christian Europe and moulding a state out of the heterogeneous elements of old Pannonia For this reason we find it improper to call him a rude barbarian, as contemporary Christian writers are in the habit of doing He evidently was penetrated with the Persian culture and his Oriental statesmanship not only equalled but even surpassed the political ideas of the ruling men at that time at the head of affairs in Pannonia and Eastern Germany Arriving, as he did, with a restless and adventurous nomadic people, he could not mitigate at once the martial rudeness of the latter Like other Turkish and Mongolian masses the Hungarians, very soon after the occupation of the country, rushed out into the neighboring lands to gratify their lust of adventure and booty. They penetrated into Germany, spreading terror and devastation everywhere On a larger

43 ÁRPÁD TAKES POSSESSION OF HUNGARY

scale was their inroad into Italy in 899, where King Berengar was defeated on the banks of the Brenta. Twenty thousand Italians were slain, the wealthy cities of Milan, Pavia, and Brescia were plundered, and the invaders crossed even the Po. It was only by the payment of a large ransom that the Italians could free themselves from the scourge of these Asiatic conquerors. Encouraged by this success the Hungarians, in the following year, entered Germany, trying their arms with varying fortune, until a common decision of the chieftains arrested these incursions. In 907 the nation was saddened by a mournful event. The ruler who had founded the new empire, who for nearly twenty years had directed the destinies of the nation with so much wisdom and energy, and in whom the glory of great statesmanship and generalship was united, had ceased to be amongst the living. His body was, according to ancient custom, burned and his ashes buried near a brook flowing at that time in a pebbly bed towards Etzelburg, the Old-Buda of to-day. His grateful descendants, after the introduction of Christianity, erected on that spot a church, called the White Church of the Virgin, in commemoration of the immortal prince. He was succeeded by his son Zoltán, who had to seize the reins at a comparatively tender age, and who was therefore assisted by three governors. This circumstance encouraged the neighboring princes to fall upon Hungary in order to drive the new conquerors out of the country. Luitpold, Duke of Bavaria, and Ditmar, Archbishop of Salzburg, together with others, led the united army

in three different columns, flattering themselves with the hope that, imitating the tactics of Charlemagne against the Avars, they would be as successful as that famous ruler of the Franks.

The Hungarians, menaced by such an imminent danger, concentrated all their forces to resist the onslaught. Always quick to resolve and as quick in their movements, they anticipated the attack, and the two hostile armies met in 907 in the environs of Presburg. The struggle on both sides was a bitter one. The zeal of the Germans, on the one hand, was excited by the prospect of ridding themselves and the whole Occident of the disagreeable neighborhood of these dangerous intruders, whilst with the Hungarians, on the other hand, it was a question of self-preservation, for in case of a defeat they had every thing at stake. The latter, therefore, fought with the utmost vehemence, not in regular battle array, after the German fashion, but with their storming divisions, furious attacks, feigned retreats, and renewed onslaughts, their arrows and javelins descending every time like a hail-storm, they broke through the serried ranks of the Germans and rode down every thing that was in their way. The sun rose and set three times over the heads of the fighting armies before the great battle was decided. The Germans were hopelessly defeated. Duke Luitpold lost his life fighting, and with him the Archbishop of Salzburg, as well as most of the bishops, abbots, and counts, laid down their lives during those three fatal days.

It was but natural that, encouraged by this success-

ful battle, the Hungarians should eagerly continue their marauding expeditions in every direction into Germany and even France. Dividing into small bands, just as the Turcomans used to do up to quite recent times in Persia, the Hungarians infested the whole of Saxony and Thuringia, and penetrated as far as Bremen. They crossed the Rhine, flooded a part of France, and quick as were their inroads, no less promptly did they return, always laden with rich booty and driving before them a long file of slaves of both sexes. The entire Occident was continually harassed by them, and this gave rise to those dire misrepresentations of the Hungarians and to the execrations against them which could be heard all over the western world during the tenth century, and which were faithfully copied into the chronicles of that time. In these chronicles they were charged with devouring the hearts of their enemies in order to render themselves irresistible in battle. Signs in the heavens were said to herald their approach. Virgins devoted to the service of God foretold the irruptions of the Hungarians and their own martyrdom. Mere human power seemed hopeless against them · the litanies of that time, therefore, abound in special prayers asking for the protection of the Lord. Impartial history easily recognizes in all this partly exaggerations, partly outbreaks of dismay, and the effects of fright, but these utterances, overdrawn as they are, contribute much to our knowledge of the violence of the struggle between the western Christians and the Asiatic Hungarians. Quite differently and by no means so dreadfully are the Hun-

garians described by the Byzantine historians. Their reputation for ferocity, and the knowledge of the terror they inspired, enhanced their valor and audacity. Neglecting all precautionary measures, and undervaluing their enemies, they began to meet here and there with small disasters, and, as the Germans on the other hand, becoming familiar with their mode of warfare, and more accustomed to the strange appearance of Asiatic warriors, grew bolder and bolder, we may easily account for the turn which gradually took place in the war fortunes of the Magyars. It was Henry the Fowler, King of Germany, who, after making preparations for nine years, inflicted the first heavy loss upon the Hungarian adventurers near Merseburg in 933. The Germans rushed into the battle with the cry of "Kyrie eleyson," whilst the Hungarians were wildly shouting "Hooy, Hooy." The Saxon horsemen caught up the Hungarian arrows with their shields, and in solid ranks threw themselves in fierce onset upon the Hungarians. The latter perceived with surprise and dismay that they were opposed by a well-organized enemy. During the hand-in-hand fight which now ensued the Germans achieved victory by their determined bravery. A great many Hungarians fell in the fight, and many more were killed during their retreat. The number of killed is assumed to have been thirty-six thousand. The Hungarian camp with all the baggage fell into the hands of the victors. Henry commanded that a universal thanksgiving feast should be observed throughout the whole of Germany, and ordered that the tribute hitherto paid

to the Hungarians should be divided between the churches and the poor.

The Hungarians now refrained from entering Germany in a northern direction, but the more frequent and more vehement grew their irruptions into Bavaria and also into the northern portion of the Byzantine empire. It was the old lust of conquest and adventure, and greediness for booty which spurred their activity. Duke Taksony, who succeeded his father Zoltán in 946, and reigned until 972, was animated by the same lawless spirit, and the Hungarians would have continued to be the scourge of the neighboring countries if the defensive measures taken by the Germans about this time had not acted as a dam against their devastating flood. In the year 955, on the river Lech, near Augsburg, King Otto the Great inflicted a terrible defeat upon the Hungarians—a defeat by which nearly the whole of the Hungarian army, numbering forty thousand men was annihilated. Their generals, Bulcsee and Lehel were captured; the chains of gold they wore around their necks, as well as other trinkets of gold and silver, were taken from them, and at last they were carried to Ratisbon, and were made to suffer a disgraceful death by being hanged. A part of their fellow captives were buried alive, whilst the others were tortured to death in the most cruel manner. The remainder of the army was destroyed in its retreat by the people who had everywhere risen, and, according to tradition, but seven were left to reach their homes. The Magyars, a proud nation even in their misfortune, were so incensed against these

fugitives for having preferred a cowardly flight to a heroic death, that they were scornfully nicknamed the *Melancholy Magyars*, and condemned to servitude. Even their descendants wandered about through the land as despised beggars.

A tradition has survived amongst the people to this day, about the death of Lehel and his reputed ivory bugle-horn, upon which there are carved representations of battles. It is true that archæological inquiry has proved its sculpture to be of Roman workmanship and that it was a drinking-cup rather than a bugle. The legend, however, as still current amongst the Hungarians, deserves to be told for the sake of its romantic character.

Amidst the confusion and wild disorder incident upon the disastrous battle of Augsburg, Duke Lehel found no time to give thought to his battle-horn. His horse had been killed under him, and whilst he lay buried beneath it the trusty sword was wrenched from the hand of the hero before he could pierce his own heart with it. Taken prisoner he was led captive into the presence of the victorious Otto.

Princely judges sat in judgment on the princely captive and condemned him to death. This sentence caused Lehel no pain ; he felt he had deserved it, not, indeed, for having given battle but for losing it. Yet it hurt him to the soul to see the rebel Conrad seated amongst his judges, the traitor who had invited the Hungarians to enter Germany, and who, by his defection, had caused their defeat. The success of his dastardly desertion had, however, conciliated the victors and restored him to their confidence.

Lehel begged but for one favor, and that was to be allowed to wind the horn, his faithful and inseparable friend, once more, and to sound on it his funeral dirge. The horn was handed to him. He sounded it for the last time; and, as he drew from it the sad strains which sounded far and wide and were mournfully re-echoed by the distant hills, the dying warrior on the field of Lech lifted up his head, eagerly listening to the familiar bugle, and the soul which had come back to him, for one instant, took wings again as soon as the sad strains died away. The dying music, plaintively quivering, told the tale of an inglorious death terminating an heroic life. The very henchmen were listening with rapture.

At that moment Lehel broke away from his place, and, seeing Conrad before him, felled him to the ground, killing him with a single blow from the heavy horn. "Thou shalt go before me and be my servant in the other world," said Lehel. Thereupon he went to the place of execution. There is discernible on Lehel's horn, in our days, a large indentation which posterity attributes to the event just narrated.

Not only in Germany but also in the southeast of Europe the marauding Hungarians experienced more than one disaster, and it may be properly said that in 970, when they attacked the Byzantine empire and were defeated near Arcadiopolis, their long series of irruptions into the adjoining countries was brought to a conclusion. They became convinced that while they themselves were steadily decreasing in numbers and wasting their strength in continu-

ous wars, the neighboring nations were becoming every day more formidable by dint of their unanimity, organization, courage, and skill in warfare, and that, in consequence, the Hungarian name inspired no more the terror which the first successes had earned for it. They saw that if they went on with their inroads, as hitherto, they would thereby but bring about the dissolution of the empire from within, or that they might provoke on the part of foreign nations a united attack which they would be unable to withstand. For this reason they renounced those adventurous campaigns which began already seriously to menace their existence and their future in Europe.

They were strengthened in the wisdom of this course by Duke Geyza, who succeeded his father in 972, and reigned until 997. Baptized during the life of his father at Constantinople, and having married Sarolta, the mild-tempered daughter of Duke Gyula, of Transylvania, he became very early awake to the necessity of refining the rude manners of his people. His disposition became much more apparent when, after the death of his first wife, he married the sister of Miecislas, the prince of Poland, a lady famous for her beauty, and also conspicuous for her energy and masculine qualities, for she vied in riding, drinking, and the chase with her chivalrous husband, upon whom she really exercised an extraordinary influence. Extremely severe in his rule, it was Geyza who began to transform the manners and habits of the Magyars. They began to show greater toleration towards foreign religions, and were really

on the eve of changing their Asiatic manners and habits into those of Europe. More than a hundred years had passed since their migration from the ancestral steppes. Historical events, difference of climate, and, above all, the separation from their Asiatic brethren had carried into oblivion very many features of that political and social life which, originating in Asia, could not be well continued in the immediate neighborhood of, and in the continual contact with, the western world. The great crisis in the national career appears to have arrived at its culmination during the reign of Duke Geyza, and to have found its ultimate solution in the conversion of the Magyars to Christianity, a most important act in the national life of the people, which deserves consideration in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY

The Hungarians, when entering their present homes, were heathens, and professed what is called *Shamanism*, the faith common to all the branches of the vast Uralo-Altaic race, and which has survived to this day amongst the populations of Southern Siberia and Western Mongolia. The doctrines and principles of Shamanism being generally but little known, it is proper to sketch here its outlines, in order to make clear the character of the Hungarian religious rites and customs.

The believers in Shamanism adored one Supreme Being called *Isten*, a word borrowed from the Persians, who attach to it to this day the meaning of God. Besides the supreme being, they adored sundry spirits or protecting deities, such as the gods of the mountains, woods, springs, rivers, fire, thunder, etc. These divinities were adored either by prayers or through sacrifices offered to them in the recesses of woods, or near springs. What these prayers of the Hungarians were we do not know; we can form, however, some idea of their character on reading the prayers of the present Shaman worshippers, a specimen of which is here subjoined:

" O, thou God living above, Abiash !
Who hast clad the earth with grass,
Who hast given leaves to the tree,
Who hast provided the calves with flesh,
Who didst bring forth hair on the head,
Who didst create all the creatures,
Who prepares every thing present !
Thou hast created the stars, O God !
O, Alton Pi, who hast exalted the father,
O, Ulgen Pi, who hast exalted the mother,
Thou creator of all created things,
Thou preparer of all that is prepared,
O God, thou creator of the stars,
O give us cattle, O God !
Give food, O God !
Give us a chief, O God !
Thou preparer of all things prepared,
Thou creator of all things created !
I prayed to my Father
To bestow on me his blessing,
To give me help,
To me, in my house,
And to my cattle, in the herd !
Before thee I bow down.
Give thy blessing, O Kudai,
Thou Creator of all things created,
Thou preparer of all things prepared ! "

The sacrifices consisted in the offering up of cattle and particularly, on solemn occasions, of white horses. Their priests, called *Táltos*, occupied a pre-eminent place, not only in the political but also in the social life of the Magyars. They were a kind of augurs and soothsayers, whose prophecies were based either upon certain natural phenomena, or upon the inspection of certain portions of slaughtered animals, such as the intestines, the heart, and shoulder-blade, which latter was put into the fire, good and bad

auspices being prognosticated from the different positions of the cracks produced.

Religious faith being always open to outside or foreign influence, it was but natural that the Hungarians, in that long march from the interior of Asia into Europe, should have borrowed many novel features from the religious life of the countries through which they passed. Thus, in the earlier faith of the Magyars, we meet with many distinctive traits of the Parsee religion, of that of the Khazars, and of the religions of many Ugrian races, for, like other families of the Uralo-Altaic race, the Magyars were conspicuous for their spirit of toleration towards other believers.

The numerous Christian prisoners they had brought with them from various parts of Europe were not only left in the undisturbed practice of their creeds, but were even permitted to influence to a very considerable degree the faith of their conquerors and masters. Under these circumstances it was by no means a hazardous undertaking, on the part of Duke Geyza, to give permission to missionaries and priests to come into the country and preach the gospel. A Suabian monk named Wolfgang was the first who tried to spread Christianity in Hungary in 917. A greater success was achieved by Pilgrin, the bishop of Passau, who, taking the matter of conversion into his hands, was able to report to the Pope in 974 that nearly five thousand Hungarians had been baptized, and that "under the benign influence of the miraculous grace of God those heathens even who have remained in their

erring ways forbid no one the baptism, nor do they interfere with the priests, allowing them to go where they please. Christians and heathens dwell together in such harmony that here the prophecy of Isaiah seems to be fulfilled: 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.'"

Considering the difficulty of turning inveterate Asiatics to western views of life, and, particularly to the totally different doctrines of the Christian religion, we may easily realize that the total conversion of the Magyars was a work attended with many struggles and difficulties. After Pilgrin we find Bruno engaged in the pious undertaking; but by far the most successful of all of the missionaries was St. Adalbert, the bishop of Prague, who came to the country in 993, and, remaining there for a considerable period of time, had the good fortune to baptize several members of the reigning family, amongst whom was the son of Duke Geyza, called Vayik, to whom was given the Christian name of Stephen. This conversion being regarded as one of the most momentous events in the history of the Hungarians, it will be worth while explaining the accompanying illustration, representing this act. In the baptistry, we perceive, as the principal personage, Stephen, in his baptismal robes. Next to him is seen St. Adalbert, robed and adorned in keeping with his episcopal dignity and the apostolic office of conversion. To the left in the foreground, as witnesses to the baptism, are standing the Emperor of Germany, Otto III., who was brought there by his friendship

BAPTISM OF ST. STEPHEN.
(From a painting by P. N. Geiger)

for Geyza and his interest in the baptism of Stephen, and Count Teodato, of San Severino, a knight who had emigrated from Apulia, and to whom Geyza had entrusted the education of his son. Behind the latter stands Duke Henry of Bavaria, who, attending the emperor, is present as a guest. Farther in the background we perceive Duke Geyza and his consort, sunk in pious revery. We see Stephen after the act of confessing his faith and knowledge of Christianity. Already he had turned his face toward the west, had renounced Satan and devoted himself to the eternal war of the children of God, and then, turning to the east, had vowed, with exalted enthusiasm, obedience and devotion to the Law of God as revealed through Christ. Now we see him, according to the custom of the Church at that time, in the act of descending into the baptismal font in order to receive from the hands of the holy bishop the sign of the Cross, the sacrament of spiritual regeneration.

Pious emotion is reflected in the countenances of the attendant Magyars, although there may be discernible here and there the expression of a hidden spirit of antagonism. And the supposition of such an expression can, in no way, be called a groundless one. The worship of God on the banks of rivers, in woods and groves, the offering of sacrifices, and sundry superstitions connected with the soothsaying of the Shaman priests, certainly impressed more forcibly the minds of the free and independent dwellers of the steppes than the mass pronounced in Latin, and the rites of the Catholic Church, introduced by the monks and priests of the West. Conversion to

Christianity had to be unconditionally followed up not only by the relinquishment of the old national religion, but also by the renunciation of the ancient habits and manners, to which the Hungarians clung in spite of the generations that had passed since their coming to the banks of the Danube and Theiss. The reluctance, shown here and there, must be also ascribed to the overbearing attitude assumed by the foreign missionaries towards the ruling race of the Magyars, upon whom these Bavarians, Suabians, Czechs, Italians, etc., looked down as contemptible barbarians, a title they by no means deserved, for it was only the difference in culture and not the want of culture which separated the two elements. Suffice it to say that traces of this discontent became visible very early, and that the slumbering spark broke out in open rebellion in 997, in the very year when Stephen ascended the throne, made vacant through the death of his father, Geyza. History records three different risings, which took place with the intention of doing away with the newly introduced Christian religion, together with all the changed modes of life borrowed from western civilization. In the first instance the movement was headed by Kopán, a nobleman in the county of Sümeg. His object was to drive out the foreign Christian missionaries and priests, to dethrone Stephen, and to re-establish the old pagan faith. A vast multitude of discontented Hungarians gathered under his banners, but Stephen was not at all afraid. Collecting his army and the foreign Christian knights about him, he left his regal seat Gran (Esztergom),

and marched on straight against the rebels. The engagement took place in the vicinity of Veszprém. It was a hard contested struggle, and only after a bitter fight and the death of Kopán himself, did his adherents lay down their arms. The happy issue of the battle decided the victory of Christianity in Hungary, and all that was still needed, was to strengthen the new faith. The effects of this victory were, nevertheless, of short duration, for in the year 1002, another anti-Christian movement broke out in Transylvania, whose ruler, Duke Gyula, uniting with the partly pagan, partly Mohammedan Petchenegs, made an inroad into Hungary, carrying devastation and bloodshed everywhere. Stephen now had to march against this dangerous enemy, and not only vanquished the Hungarian duke Gyula, but continued his march into the country of the Petchenegs, defeated their prince, Kaan, and looting his camp got possession of all the rich treasures these Petchenegs had carried away from the Greek empire.

The third and decidedly the most dangerous rising took place in 1046, when a certain Vatha, a zealous adherent of the former pagan religion, and an offspring of Duke Gyula, availing himself of the disturbances arising from the contest for the succession to the throne, incited the people against the Christian religion and its institutions. They urged Andrew, the pretender to the throne of the country, "to abolish the Christian religion and its institutions; to re-establish the ancient religion and the laws brought from Asia, and demanded that they should be permitted to pull down the churches, and to drive

out the priests and the foreign immigrants." Unaware of the number and strength of the rebels the prince did not venture to refuse their request. This the rebels took for a tacit compliance, and, emboldened by it, they fell, with wild rage, upon the Christians. The Germans and Italians that were found in the country, especially the bishops and priests, were persecuted with most inhuman cruelty. The churches and other places devoted to Christian piety were destroyed, the ancient pagan religion was restored, and everywhere the people resumed the former mode of life according to their ancient customs and heathen faith, offering up sacrifices, as before, in woods and groves and near springs. During these disorders St. Gerhard, the former tutor of St. Emeric, and at that time bishop of Csanád, lost his life. He was on his way to Pesth, to meet Andrew, when he fell into the hands of the enraged populace, was killed by them on the mountain opposite Pesth, called Gellérthegy (Mount Gerhard) to this day, and his body was thrown into the Danube. Utterly dangerous as the symptoms of these risings were, we see, however, how deeply even at that time Christianity had taken root in Hungary. It very soon became apparent that the revolution was not only of a religious but of a political and social character. King Andrew issued rigorous laws, menacing every one who did not return to the Christian religion and renounce the practice of heathenish customs, with loss of life and property. The destroyed churches were to be rebuilt, and the order of things introduced by Stephen be respected again.

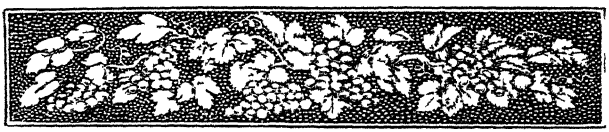
These laws and the punishments inflicted upon some of the stubborn adherents of paganism did not fail to produce their effect, and, in a short time, the rebellion was crushed and order and quiet gradually restored throughout the country.

And, strange to say, just as the Mohammedan Turks of our day ascribe the decline and downfall of their power to the many innovations introduced into their religious and social life, and discover the main source of their ruin in the assimilation to the West, precisely so spoke and argued the Hungarians of that day. They laid particular stress upon the fact that the nation, whilst adhering to the religion and customs of its ancestors, had been independent, strong, and mighty, and had even made the whole of Europe tremble; but that now, since it had adopted the religion and customs of the West, the nation was weakened by internal dissensions, strangers had become her masters, foreign armies had penetrated into the very heart of the country—nay, Hungary had lost her independence and had become the vassal of a foreign power. Such representations could not fail to produce their effect. It was easy to convince the uncultivated Hungarians, who were not yet confirmed in the Christian religion and but ill brooked its severe discipline, that all those troubles and misfortunes which had visited the country were the consequences of the introduction of Christianity, and that to achieve a splendid future for the nation, in harmony with its glorious past, this must be done upon the ruins of Christianity and of the institutions introduced by Stephen.

This great change, however repugnant it may have seemed to the Hungarians, was, nevertheless, unavoidable. As previously stated, the foreign elements which flooded the country, owing to the very large number of captives the Hungarians brought with them from every part of Europe, had wrought that change in the manners and habits of life in spite of all the reluctance of the former Asiatic nomads. These captives greatly outnumbering their masters, were mostly used for agricultural purposes, but their close contact with the ruling class unavoidably produced a mitigation of the rude military habits of the latter. The Hungarians eagerly listened to the Christian chants and prayers of their subjects. They imitated them in their food and dress, and, although nearly two centuries had to pass before the former wanderers on the Central-Asiar steppes could get accustomed to permanent habitations, and, despite the aversion the proud warrior felt to the plow, the ice, nevertheless, began to break. The Asiatic mode of thinking had to be given up, and with the tenets of Christian tradition habits of Christian life were gradually introduced.

This process of transformation was greatly quickened by the personal intercourse and family connections of Duke Geyza and his chieftains with the court and nobility of the neighboring countries. Besides the involuntary immigration caused by the forays, we meet with a remarkable influx of foreign noblemen who, on the invitation of Duke Geyza, settled in the country, towards the end of the tenth century. The brothers Hunt and Pázmán came from

Suabia, Count Buzád from Meissen, Count Hermann from Nuremberg; the Czech knights Radovan, Bogát, and Lodán came with large retinues; many others immigrated from Italy and Greece, so that the high nobility of Hungary, already at the beginning of the conversion of the Magyars, had a large infusion of foreign blood. It may be added that the entire clergy of that day was composed of Czechs, Germans, and Italians. The ground was, therefore, duly prepared, and it wanted only the iron hand of a resolute and wise ruler to achieve the work of conversion, and to accomplish the great task of transforming a formerly warlike and nomadic nation into a Christian and peaceful community. This ruler was King Stephen I.



CHAPTER VI.

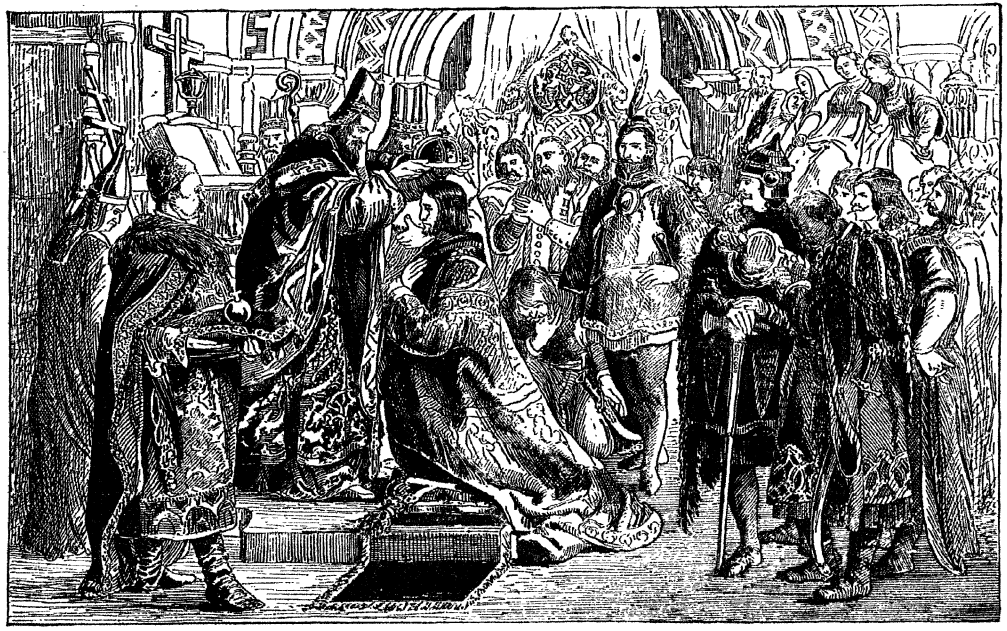
ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST KING OF HUNGARY.

997–1038.

KING STEPHEN led the Hungarian nation from the darkness of paganism into the light of Christianity, and from the disorders of barbarism into the safer path of western civilization. He induced his people to abandon the fierce independence of nomadic life, and assigned to them a place in the disciplined ranks of European society and of organized states. Under him, and through his exertions, the Hungarian people became a western nation. Never was a change of such magnitude, and we may add such a providential change, accomplished in so short a time, with so little bloodshed, and with such signal success as this remarkable transformation of the Hungarian people. The contemporaries of this great and noble man, those who assisted him in guiding the destinies of the Hungarian nation, gave him already full credit for the wise and patriotic course pursued by him, and the Hungarian nation of the present day still piously and gratefully cherishes his memory. To the Hungarians of to-day, although eight and a half centuries removed from St. Stephen, his form continues to be a living one, and

they still fondly refer to his exalted example, his acts, his opinions, and admonitions, as worthy to inspire and admonish the young generations in their country.

This need be no matter for surprise, for at no period of Hungary's history has her political continuity been interrupted in such a way as to make her lose sight of the noble source from which its greatness sprang. No doubt a complete change has taken place in the political and social order, in the course of so many centuries, but the state structure, however modified, still rests upon the deep and sure foundations laid by the wisdom of her first king. One day in the year, the 20th of August—called St. Stephen's day—is still hallowed to his memory. On that day his embalmed right hand is carried about with great pomp and solemnity, in a brilliant procession, accompanied by religious ceremonies, through ancient Buda, and shown to her populace. The kingdom of Hungary is called the realm of St. Stephen to this day, the Hungarian kings are still crowned with the crown of St. Stephen, and the nation acknowledges only him to be its king whose temples have been touched by the sacred crown. The Catholic Church in Hungary although it no more occupies its former pre-eminent position in the state, still retains enough of power, wealth, and splendor to bear ample testimony to the lavish liberality of St. Stephen. Thus the historian meets everywhere with traces of his benignant activity, and whilst the fame and saintliness of the great king have surrounded his name with a luminous halo in



CORONATION OF ST. STEPHEN.

the annals of his nation, that very brilliancy has prevented from coming down to posterity such mere terrestrial and every-day details as would assist in drawing his portrait. The grand outlines of his form detach themselves vividly and sharply from the dark background of his age—but there is a lack of contemporary accounts which would help to fill up these outlines, and the legends of the succeeding generations, which make mention of him, can but ill supply this want, for they regard in him the saint only, and not the man. His deeds alone remain to guide us in the task of furnishing a truthful picture of the founder of his country, and well may we apply to him the words of Scripture, that the tree shall be known by its fruit.

Stephen was born in Gran (Esztergom), the first and most ancient capital of Hungary, about 969, at a time when his father had not yet succeeded to the exalted position of ruler over Hungary, and a magnificent memorial chapel in the Roman style of the tenth century, erected there, marks the event of his birth in that place. His mother Sarolta, Geyza's first wife, was the daughter of that Gyula, Duke of Transylvania, who, whilst upon a mission to Constantinople, in 943, had embraced the Christian faith and subsequently endeavored to spread it at home. Thus a Christian mother watched prayerfully at the cradle of young Stephen, and in early childhood, already, the tender mind of the boy was guided by the pious Count of San Severino. Adalbert, the Archbishop of Prague, who sought a martyr's death and subsequently won the martyr's crown, intro-

duced him to the community of professing Christians. With his wife Gisella, a Bavarian princess, at his side, he took his place among the Western rulers as their kinsman. While his long reign proved him to be true to his country and his nation, yet the paganism of the ancient Hungarians was quite foreign to his soul.

After the first half of the tenth century religious ideas began to exercise a more powerful influence in Europe than before. The great movement which originated in the monastery of Cluny, in France, held out to the world the promise of a new salvation. Men of extraordinary endowments began again to proclaim with evangelical enthusiasm the mortification of the flesh, in order to exalt the soul, and the suppression of earthly desires for the purpose of restoring the true faith to its pristine glory. They insisted that the shepherd of the faithful souls, the Church, should be freed from all earthly fetters and interests, for, just as the soul was above the body, so was the Church superior to the worldly communities. The Church therefore, they taught, must be raised from her humiliating position, her former dependence changed into a state of the most complete freedom. As a consequence, the visible head of the Church, the Pope, could not be allowed to remain the servant of the head of the worldly power, the emperor, for it was the former that Providence had entrusted with the care of the destinies and happiness of humanity. These ideas spread triumphantly and with incredible rapidity throughout all Europe. They were heralded by

a sort of prophetic frenzy; and soul-stirring fanaticism followed in their train. The age of asceticism, long past and become an object almost of contempt, was rescued from oblivion and revived. The despised body was again subjected to tortures and vexations, and the purified soul longed for the destruction of its own earthly existence in order to soar on high freed from mundane trammels. It was the miraculous age of hermits, saints, and martyrs who made it resound with their wailing and weeping, changing this home of dust into a valley of tears, so that the soul transported to the regions of bliss might appear in greater splendor to the dazzled eyes of the earthly beholder. The popes, moreover, riding high on the unchained waves, guided the Church through the tempest of the newly awakened religious passions, with a watchful eye and steady persistence toward one end—the exaltation of the papal power over that of the emperors. At the end of the tenth century Pope Sylvester II. was the representative of the spirit of the age clamoring for the aggrandizement of the papal power, and Otto III. represented in opposition to him the imperial power, undermined by the new ideas. Since the overthrow of the Western Roman empire the world had not been called upon to witness a contest of greater import than the impending struggle between these two rival powers. The great upheaval, indeed, which was to shake Europe to its very centre, did not take place until half a century later, but the seeds, from which the war of ecclesiastical investiture, the stir of the crusades, and the universality of the papal

power were to spring, were already scattered throughout the soil which had lain barren through many centuries.

This was the age which gave birth to Stephen and in which he was educated, but his exalted mind rejected the exaggerations, eccentricities, and errors of his time and accepted only its noble sentiments and ideas. His sober-mindedness was equal to his religious enthusiasm, and as his innate energy exceeded both, he left it to religious visionaries to indulge in ascetic dreams. He desired to be the apostle of the promises of his faith, but not their martyr. He made the maintenance, defence, and extension of Christianity the task of his life, because he saw in its establishment the only sure means for the safety and happiness of his people. He pursued no schemes looking to adventures in foreign lands, but devoted all his thoughts, feelings, and energies to his own nation, subordinating to her interests everybody and every thing else. He defended these alike against imperial attacks and papal encroachments. His eyes were fixed on the Cross, but his strong right arm rested on the hilt of his sword, and his apostolic zeal never made him forget for a single moment his duty to a people which had gone through many trials, whose position amongst the European nations was a very difficult one, whose destinies rested in his hands, and who were yet to be called upon to play a great part in the history of the world.

Stephen was about twenty-eight years old when he succeeded his father in 997. He at once embarked with the enthusiasm of youth, coupled with the

deliberation and constancy of manhood, on his mission to bring to a happy conclusion the task begun by his mother. In this work he was sedulously assisted by Astrik and his monastic brethren, and the gaze of the foreign Christian lords, who had immigrated with his Bavarian wife, as well as of the great number of lay and ecclesiastical persons who came flocking to the country, was centred upon the young royal leader, who surpassed them all in zeal and enthusiasm. He spared no pains, nor was he deterred by dangers; he visited in person the remotest parts of the realm, bringing light to places where darkness prevailed, and imparting truth where error stalked defiantly. He sought out the men of distinction and the mighty of the land, and the hearts which were closed to the message of the foreign monks freely opened to his wise and friendly exhortations. Where he could not prevail by the charms of his apostolic persuasion he unhesitatingly threw the weight of his royal sword into the scale. Whilst battling with the arms of truth he did not recoil from using violence, if necessary, in its service. Fate did not spare him the cruel necessity of having to proceed even against his own blood.

The more rapidly and successfully the work of conversion went on, the greater became the apprehension and exasperation of those who looked upon the destruction of the ancient pagan faith as dangerous and ruinous to their nation. Nor did these recoil from any hazard to maintain their faith and to prevent the national ruin anticipated by them. They took up arms on more than one occasion, as has

been previously mentioned, but Stephen succeeded in quelling the dangerous rebellions. Assisted by the foreign knights, he broke the power of paganism, and he showed no regard for any pretence of national aspirations. Those who still harbored the ancient faith in their hearts kept it secretly locked up there, and for the time being at least did homage to the new faith and the power of the king. The possessions of the rebels were devoted to ecclesiastical uses, and the king, at the same time, bestirred himself in the organization of the triumphant Church. He divided the converted territory into ecclesiastical districts, providing each with a spiritual chief, and placing the ecclesiastical chief of Gran at the head of all and of the Church government instituted by him. He caused fortified places to be erected throughout the newly organized Church territory for the defence of Christianity, as well as for the maintenance of his own worldly power, which began nearly to rival that of the other Christian kings.

But in order successfully to carry into effect these measures, Stephen had to obtain their confirmation by at least one of the leading powers which then shared in the mastery over Europe—namely, imperialism and papacy. The emperors, on the one hand, claimed supreme authority over all the pagan populations converted to Christianity, while the papal see, on the other hand, was inclined to protect against the empire the smaller nations, which were jealous of their independence, in order to gain allies for the impending struggle of the

Church against the empire. Stephen was quick to choose between these two. The German Church—except in the abortive attempt made by Bishop Pilgrin—had contributed but little to the conversion of the Hungarian people, and it could therefore lay no claim to exercise any authority over the Church of Hungary. Nor had the German kings done any thing to assist Geyza and Stephen in their attempts at conversion. Stephen had before him the example of his brother-in-law, Boleslas of Poland, who had but recently applied to the papal see for the bestowal of the royal crown, in order to secure the independence of his position as a ruler and that of the Church in his realm. The religious bent of Stephen's mind, combined with his acute perception of the true interests of his country, induced him, at last, in the spring of 1000, to send a brilliant embassy to Rome, under the lead of the faithful, experienced, and indefatigable Astrik.

Pope Sylvester II., than whom no one exerted himself more strenuously to increase the papal power, received the Hungarian envoys cordially, and upon learning from Astrik their mission, he exclaimed: "I am but apostolic, but thy master who sent thee here is, in truth, the apostle of Christ himself!" He readily complied with Stephen's every request, adding even more signal favors. He confirmed the bishoprics already established, and empowered him to establish additional ones, conferring upon Stephen, at the same time, such rights in the administration of the affairs of the Church of Hungary as hitherto had been allowed only to the most illustrious

princes in Christendom, the sovereigns of France and Germany. He granted to Stephen and his successors the right of styling themselves "apostolic kings," and to have carried before them, on solemn occasions, the double cross, as an emblem of their independent ecclesiastical authority. As a further mark of his favor, the Pope presented Stephen with the crown which had been destined for Boleslas of Poland, in order to symbolize for all times to come the blessing bestowed upon the Hungarian kingdom by God's representative upon earth. The crown of today, weighing altogether 136 ounces, is not quite identical with the crown that adorned St. Stephen's head. It now consists of two parts. The upper and more ancient part is the crown sent by Pope Sylvester, the lower one has been added at a later date. The former is formed by two intersecting hoops and connected at the four lower ends by a border. On its top is a small globe capped by a cross, which is now in an inclined position, and beneath it is seen a picture of the Saviour in sitting posture, surrounded by the sun, the moon, and two trees. The entire surface of the two hoops is adorned with the figures of the twelve apostles, each having an appropriate Latin inscription, but four of these figures are covered by the lower crown. The lower or newer crown is an open diadem from which project, in front, representations of ruins, which terminate in a crest alternating with semicircular bands. The seams of the latter are covered with smaller-sized pearls, and larger oval pearls adorn the crests. Nine small drooping chains, laid out with precious

stones, are attached to the lower rim. A large sapphire occupies the centre of the front of the diadem, and above it, on a semicircular shield, is a representation of the Saviour. To the left and right of the sapphire are representations of the archangels, Michael and Gabriel, and of the four saints, Damianus, Dominic, Cosmus, and George, and, finally, of the Greek emperors, Constantine Porphyrogenitus and Michael Ducas, and of the Hungarian king Geyza, with inscriptions. With regard to the upper crown no doubt whatever is entertained as to its being the one sent by Pope Sylvester, and concerning the lower crown Hungarian historians state that it was sent, about 1073, by the Greek emperor, Michael Ducas, to the Hungarian duke, Geyza, as a mark of gratitude for the good services rendered to him by the latter. The exact date when the two crowns united cannot be ascertained. This minute description of the crown of Hungary may be well pardoned, considering the antiquity and the high veneration in which this relic of the past is held by the Hungarian people.

The legend of St. Stephen speaks thus of Astrik's mission to the Eternal City: "Father Astrik having accomplished his errand in Rome, and obtained even more than he had asked for, returned joyfully home. As he was nearing Gran the king came out to meet him with great pomp, and Father Astrik showed him the presents he had brought with him from Rome, the royal crown and the cross. Stephen offered up thanks to God, and subsequently expressed his gratitude to the Pope for the presents received. The great prelates, the clergy, the lords, and the peo-

ple having listened to the contents of the letter conveying the apostolic benediction, with one heart and soul and with shouts of joy acclaimed Stephen their king, and having been anointed with the sacred oil, he was crowned on the day of Mary's ascension (15th of August) at Gran."

That highly important letter brought by Astrik from Rome, which established the independent authority of the Hungarian kings over the national church, has been preserved to this day. The following lines of the papal bull may in some measure characterize the age in which they were written, and illustrate, at the same time, the importance which was ascribed to these missives during many centuries:

"My glorious son," the letter proceeds to say, after having in the introduction exalted Stephen's apostolic zeal, "all that which thou hast desired of the apostolic see, the crown, the royal title, the metropolitan see at Gran, and the other bishoprics, we joyfully allow and grant thee by the authority derived from Almighty God and Saints Peter and Paul, together with the apostolic and our own benediction. The country which thou hast offered, together with thy own self, to St. Peter, and the people of Hungary, present and future, being henceforth received under the protection of the Holy Roman Church, we return them to thy wisdom, thy heirs, and rightful successors, to possess, rule, and govern the same. Thy heirs and successors, too, having been lawfully elected by the magnates of the land, shall be likewise bound to testify to ourselves and our successors

their obedience and respect, to prove themselves subjects of the Holy Roman Church, to steadfastly adhere to, and support the religion of Christ our Lord and Saviour. And as thy Highness did not object to undertake the apostolic office of proclaiming and spreading the faith of Christ, we feel moved to confer, besides, upon thy Excellency and out of regard for thy merits, upon thy heirs and lawful successors, this especial privilege: we permit, desire, and request that, as thou and thy successors will be crowned with the crown we sent thee, the wearing of the double cross may serve thee and them as an apostolic token, even so that, according to the teachings of God's mercy, thou and they may direct and order, in our and our successors' place and stead, the present and future churches of thy realm. * * * We also beseech Almighty God that thou mayest rule and wear the crown, and that He shall cause the fruits of His truth to grow and increase; that He may abundantly water with the dew of His blessing the new plants of thy realm; that He may preserve unimpaired thy country for thee, and thee for thy country; that He may protect thee against thy open and secret foes, and adorn thee, after the vexations of thy earthly rule, with the eternal crown in His heavenly kingdom."

The brilliant successes so rapidly achieved by Stephen during the first years of his reign secured the triumph of Christianity and of the royal authority in the western half of the country only. The adherents of the ancient faith and liberty still remained in a majority in the eastern, more-thinly

peopled regions beyond the Theiss and in Transylvania. Gyula, the duke of Transylvania, and the uncle of Stephen, was not slow in protesting against the new kingdom and the innovations coupled with it. The rebellion failed, as we have already seen. Gyula and his whole family were made captives by the victors, and neither he nor his posterity ever regained their lost power. Transylvania was more closely united with the mother country, and from that time, during a period extending over more than five centuries, was ruled by *vayvodes* appointed by the kings. Soon after Stephen opposed victoriously the Petchenegs, the allies of the defeated Gyula, who were settled beyond the Transylvanian mountains in the country known at present as Roumania, and having also defeated Akhtum, who, trusting in the protection of the Greek emperor, was disposed to act the master in the region enclosed by the Danube, Theiss, and Maros, there was no one in the whole land who—openly, at least—dared to refuse homage to the crown pressing the temples of Stephen and to the double cross. During the twenty years succeeding the events just narrated, history is entirely silent as to any great martial enterprise of Stephen. It is true that hostilities were frequent along the northern and western borders against the Poles and Czechs, but they were never of a character to endanger the territorial integrity of the country. During those years of comparative peace Stephen firmly established the Hungarian Christian kingdom.

The Christian Church was the corner-stone of all social and political order in the days of Stephen.

The Church pointed out the principal objects of human endeavor, marked out the ways leading to the accomplishment of those aims, drew the bounds of the liberty of action, and prescribed to mankind its duties. It educated, instructed, and disciplined the people in the name and in the place of the state, and in doing this the Church acted for the benefit of the state. Hence it was that Stephen, in organizing the Hungarian Christian Church and placing it on a firmer basis, consulted quite as much the interests of his royal power as the promptings of his apostolic zeal. Where the Christian faith gained ground, there the respect for royalty also took root, and the first care of royalty, when its authority had become powerful, was to preserve the authority of the Church.

Immediately on his accession to the throne, Stephen addressed himself to the great and arduous task, and in all places where the promises of the holy faith, scattered by his proselyting zeal, met with a grateful soil, he established the earliest religious communities. Later, as the number of parishes rapidly increased, he appointed chief prelates to superintend and maintain the flocks and to keep them together. The ecclesiastical dignities and offices were conferred, in the beginning, without exception, upon members of the religious orders, they being at that time the most faithful warriors of Christianity against paganism, and the most devoted servants of the triumphant church. Stephen took good care of them, and rewarded them according to their merits. He founded four abbeys for these pious monks, who all of them belonged to the religious

order of St. Benedict. The abbey of Pannonhalom was the wealthiest and most distinguished among these; and to this day, it maintains the chief rank among the greatly increased number of kindred societies. The first schools were connected with the cathedrals and monasteries, and although their mission consisted mainly in propagating the new church and faith, they yet cultivated the scanty learning of the age.

Stephen endowed the bishoprics and monasteries with a generosity truly royal. He granted them large possessions in land, together with numerous bondsmen inhabiting the estates. The Hungarian Catholic Church has preserved the larger part of these grants to this day. His munificence was displayed in the cathedral at Stuhlweissenburg (Székesfejérvár), built in honor of the Virgin Mary, of whose marvels of enchantment the old chronicles speak with reverential awe. The chronicler calls it "the magnificent church famous for its wondrous workmanship, the walls of which are adorned with beautiful carvings, and whose floor is inlaid with marble slabs," and then he proceeds in this strain: "Those can bear witness to the truth of my words who have beheld there with their own eyes the numerous chasubles, sacred utensils, and other ornaments, the many exquisite tablets wrought of pure gold and inlaid with the most precious jewels about the altars, the chalice of admirable workmanship standing on Christ's table, and the various vessels of crystal, onyx, gold, and silver with which the sacristy was crowded."

Stephen's munificence was not confined to his own realm, and numerous memorials of his beneficence and generosity are still preserved in foreign lands. As soon as Christianity had gained a firm foothold in the land, and the Hungarian people felt no more as strangers in the family of Christian nations, the natives, either singly or in larger numbers, began to journey to the revered cities of Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Stephen took care that these pilgrims should feel at home in the strange places they visited. Thus, amongst other things, he had a church and dwelling-house built in Rome for the accommodation of twelve canons, providing it also with a *hospitium* (inn). In Constantinople and Jerusalem also he caused a convent and church to be erected, within whose hospitable walls the Hungarian pilgrim might find rest for his weary body, after the fatigues of the long journey, and spiritual comfort for his thirsting soul. He was ever mindful of the interests of Christianity both at home and abroad. He not only founded the Hungarian Christian Church, but knew how to make it universally respected, and, in his own time already, the popes were in the habit of referring to Hungary as the "archiregnum"—that is, a country superior to the others.

In establishing the Hungarian kingdom Stephen necessarily shaped its institutions after the pattern of the Western States, but fortunately for the nation he possessed a rare discrimination which made him imitate his neighbors in those things only which were beneficial or unavoidable, whilst he rejected their errors and refused to introduce them into his

own land. At that period feudalism, although it had sadly degenerated, prevailed, England alone excepted, throughout the whole West. It was a system which did not permit the strengthening of the central power of the state, and the countries subjected to it were divided up into parts but loosely connected, each of which acknowledged an almost independent master, who, although he held his county or duchy from his king, and owned and governed it by virtue of that tenure, was yet powerful enough to defy with impunity the sovereign himself. Without adverting to the pitiful dismemberment of Italy, we need only mention that France was divided into about fifty, and Germany into five small principalities of this character. The kings themselves might make use of their kingly title, they might bask in the splendor of their own royalty, but of the plenitude of their royal power they could but rarely and then only temporarily boast.

Stephen's chief aim was to enhance the royal power by rendering it as independent as he possibly could of restrictions on the part of the nation, and to introduce such institutions as would prove most efficacious in the defence of the integrity and unity of nation and country. He left the nobility—the descendants of those who had taken possession of the soil at the conquest of Hungary—in the undisturbed enjoyment of their ancient privileges; he did not restrict their rights, but in turn did not allow himself to be hampered by them. He only introduced an innovation with reference to the tenure of their property, which he changed from tribal to individual posses-

sion, using his royal authority to protect each man in the possession of the estates thus allotted to him. The nobles governed themselves, administered justice amongst themselves, through men of their own selection, and the king interfered only if he was especially requested to judge between them. The nobles had always free access to the king's person, not only during Stephen's reign, but for many centuries afterwards. The nobility was exempted from the payment of any kind of taxes into the royal treasury, and they joined the king's army only if the country was menaced by a foreign foe, or if they chose to offer their services of their own free will.

Inasmuch as the great power of the nobility had its foundations on freehold possessions in land, Stephen was careful to support the dignity of the royal power by the control of large domains. The royal family were already the owners of private estates of large extent, and to these the king now added those vast tracts of land which, scattered throughout the whole realm, and more particularly extending along the frontiers, were without masters, and could not well pass into private hands, as the scant Hungarian population was inadequate for their occupation. These domains, which, for the most part, were thinly inhabited by the indigenous conquered populations, speaking their own languages, and the colonization of which by foreigners became a special object with the kings, were now declared state property, and as such taken possession of and administered by Stephen. He divided these possessions into small domains, called in Latin *comitatus*, coun-

ty, and in Hungarian *megye*, eyre or circuit, and placed at the head of the administration of each county a royal official styled *comes*, count. These districts subsequently gave rise to the county system, which was destined to play such an important part in the history of the country, but originally they were designed to answer a twofold purpose, one financial and one military. One portion of the people living on these royal lands had to hand over to the royal treasury a certain part of their produce, whilst another portion was bound to military service for life. In this way the royal counties furnished a sort of standing army, always at the disposal of the king, and supplied, at the same time, the revenues necessary to support that army. Stephen found also other means to replenish his treasury and to add to his military strength. The revenues derived from the mineral and salt mines, and from the coining of money, flowed into the royal coffers; he levied, besides, a thirtieth on all merchandise, market-tolls at fairs, and collected tolls on the roads, and at bridges and ferries. The towns and the privileged territories had to pay taxes, and, on a given day, to send presents to the king. Stephen added, besides, to his military strength by granting to individuals—mostly to native or foreign noblemen of reduced circumstances—extensive estates in fee, subject to the obligation, in case of need, of joining the royal army with a fixed number of armed men. The Petchenegs, Szeklers, and Ruthenes settled as border guards along the frontiers were also obliged to render military service, and even the royal cities sent

their contingents of troops equipped by them. This brief enumeration of the means employed by Stephen to strengthen his throne, will make it evident that he provided abundant resources for maintaining the royal power, such as none of his neighbors, or even the rulers of the countries further west, had, then, at their disposal.

The royal court was the centre and faithful mirror of that kingly power, and, in its ordering and conduct, Stephen was careful to imitate foreign courts, not only in their main features, but at times even in their most minute details. The court of his imperial brother-in-law, Henry II. of Germany, especially, served him as a model. Thus it was held that the person of the king was sacred, and that to offend against him who was the embodiment of the majesty of the state, was looked upon as a crime to be punished with loss of life and fortune. The king stood above all the living, and above the law itself. Stephen surrounded himself with the distinguished men, lay and ecclesiastical, of the realm, and, aided by their counsel, administered the affairs of the country, but his word and will was a law to everybody. Amongst the officers of his court were a lord-palatine, a court-judge, a lord of the treasury, and many others, who, in part, assisted him in the government of the state and, in part, ministered to the comforts of the court. At a much later period only, after the lapse of centuries, did the offices of palatine, judge, and treasurer, become dignities of the realm.

The government of the country in time of peace involved no great care or trouble, for only the royal

domains or counties and the royal cities possessing privileges fell within the sphere of the direct power of the king and court. The Church and nobility governed themselves and applied to the king in cases of appeal only, the royal towns conducted their affairs through the agency of judges and chief magistrates elected by themselves, whilst the bulk of the people, composed of the various classes of bondmen and servants, were completely subjected to the authority and jurisdiction of the lords of the land. The bondman might move about freely, but he could never emancipate himself from the tutelage of the landlords. The Hungarian nation was composed of the same social strata which were to be met with everywhere in the West, and the growth of these pursued the same direction, differing, however, in one particular—the relation of the large landed proprietors, the nobility, to their king. To these exceptional relations must be attributed the fact that the political changes in the country did not run in parallel grooves with those of the other western states. Stephen granted no constitution, all complete, to his people; its growth was the work of centuries, but the country was indebted to him for having organized the state in such a manner that, whilst there was nothing in the way of a free and healthy development of its political institutions, its inherent strength was such that it could successfully resist the many and severe shocks to which in the course of nearly a thousand years it was subjected.

The country prospered during the long reign of

King Stephen, thanks to his untiring labors and to the rare moderation with which he tempered his passionate zeal. The nation became gradually familiar with the changes wrought, and began to accept the new order of things, although it could not quite forget the old ways. Old memories revived again and again, and those especially who bowed down before the crown and cross from compulsion and not from conviction, were filled with anxiety as to the uncertain future. Stephen thoroughly understood the feelings and prejudices of his people, and he carefully avoided every act, and steered clear of every complication which might tend to rouse their passions. He well knew that time alone could give permanence and stability to the institutions created by him, and that years of peace and continued exertions were necessary to consolidate his work. Two great objects, therefore, occupied his mind continually, even in his old age; in the first place, to defend the realm against external dangers, and in the second place, to raise a successor to himself to whom he might safely entrust the continuation of the work commenced by him.

But fate denied him the accomplishment of either of his objects. As long as Henry II., his brother-in-law, reigned there was peace between Hungary and the German empire, but the death of the latter in 1024 severed the bond of amity between the two countries. The feelings entertained by Conrad II. toward the kingdom of Hungary were very different from those manifested by his predecessor, and this change of sentiment was soon shown by Conrad's

laying claim, by virtue of his imperial prerogative, to the sovereignty over Stephen's realm. Conrad, with his ally, the Duke of Bohemia, and the united forces of his vast empire, began war in 1030, and overran with his armies the country on both banks of the Danube, as far as the Gran and the Raab. Stephen was undismayed, his courage rather rose with the perils environing him. He bade the people throughout the land to fast and pray, for not alone his kingdom was at stake, but the independence of the Hungarian Church was menaced by the imperial forces. Those who looked with indifference at the cause of the Hungarian crown and the cross, had their enthusiasm excited by the proud satisfaction of fighting in defence of the national dignity and liberty. Amongst those western nations who had been for so long a time harassed by the military expeditions of the Hungarians, the German people, feeling its strength, was the first to turn its arms against the former assailants. But Conrad's attack proved unsuccessful against the united strength of the king and the nation, between whom the peril from without had restored full harmony, and he was compelled to leave the country in the autumn of the very year in which he entered upon the war, dejectedly returning to Germany after a campaign of utter failure instead of the expected triumphs. Peace was concluded in the following year, and the emperor acknowledged the independence of the young but powerful kingdom. Conrad's son, who subsequently succeeded to the imperial throne as Henry III., visited Stephen at his court, in order to

draw closer the ties of amity between the two countries. The danger had passed for the time being, but the apprehensions of Stephen were far from being allayed as he pondered on the future. The peace just concluded did not satisfy him; there were no guaranties for its preservation, nor had he any faith in its being a permanent peace, for he well knew that the German kings, as long as they wore the imperial crown, would not fail to repeat their attacks on the independence of the young kingdom. Reflections of this sombre nature often filled his soul with despondency, and then came occasions when he entertained fears that the nation might not be strong enough to withstand the dangers threatening her, or that if she triumphed she would, in the intoxication of her victory, turn with exasperation against those innovations which had brought the foreign foes upon her.

All his hopes centred in Duke Emeric, his only son, who, under the care of the pious Bishop Gerhard, grew up to be a fine youth, full of promise, in whom his fond father discovered all those qualities which he wished him to possess for the good of his nation. The young prince was, indeed, very zealous in his faith; his piety amounted almost to frenzy, and he turned away from the world, despising its joys and harassing struggles, and seeking the salvation of his soul in self-denial and the mortification of his flesh. He was, in truth, the holy child of a holy parent, but not born to rule as the fit son of a great king. He preferred the cloister to the royal throne, and, far from inheriting the apos-

tolic virtues of his august father, he was rather inclined to indulge in the errors of the age he lived in. But the aged king, dazzled by the lustre of his son's holiness, was blind to his shortcomings. He had faith in him, for in him he saw his only hope. In order fitly to prepare him for his future royal mission, he set down for him in writing the experiences of his long and beneficent rule, and the wisdom and goodness treasured up in his heart and mind. These admonitions addressed to his son have been spared by all-devouring time, and to this day they are apt to delight and instruct us as one of the most precious relics of that age. The reader will surely be pleased with a few specimens of these exhortations:

"I cannot refrain, my beloved son," Stephen wrote, "from giving thee advice, instruction, and commands whereby to guide thyself and thy subjects. * * * Strive to obey sedulously the injunctions of thy father, for if thou despisest these thou lovest neither God nor man. Be therefore dutiful, my son; thou hast been brought up amidst delights and treasures, and knowest nothing of the arduous labors of war and the perils of hostile invasions by foreign nations, in the midst of which nearly my whole life has been passed. The time has arrived to leave behind thee those pillows of luxuriousness which are apt to render thee weak and frivolous, to make thee waste thy virtues, and to nourish in thee thy sins. Harden thy soul in order that thy mind may attentively listen to my counsels."

After enlarging in ten paragraphs upon the topic of his counsels, he proceeds as follows: "I command,

counsel, and advise thee, above all, to preserve carefully the apostolic and Catholic faith if thou wishest thy kingly crown to be held in respect, and to set such an example to thy subjects that the clergy may justly call thee a Christian man, * * * for he who does not adorn his faith with good deeds—the one being a dead thing without the others—cannot rule in honor."

Stephen then lays down rules of conduct towards the magnates of the realm, the lay lords, the high dignitaries, and the warriors, as follows: "They are, my dear son, thy fathers and thy brothers, neither call them nor make them thy servents. Let them combat for thee, but not serve thee. Rule over them peaceably, humbly, and gently, without anger, pride, and envy, bearing in mind that all men are equal, that nothing exalts more than humility, nor is there any thing more degrading than pride and envy. If thou wilt be peaceable, every one will love thee and call thee a brave king, but if thou wilt be irritable, overbearing, and envious, and look down upon the lords, the might of the warriors will weaken thy kingly state, and thou wilt lose thy realm. Govern them with thy virtues, so that, inspired by love for thee, they may adhere to thy royal dignity."

He then recommends, above all, patience and careful inquiry in the administration of justice in these words: "Whenever a capital cause or other cause of great importance be brought before thee for judgment, be not impatient, nor indulge in oaths beforehand that the accused shall be brought to punishment. Do not hasten to pronounce judgment thy-

self, lest thy royal dignity be impaired thereby, but leave the cause rather in the hands of the regular judges. Fear the functions of a judge, and even the name of a judge, and rather rejoice in being and having the name of a righteous king. Patient kings rule, impatient ones oppress. If, however, there be a cause which it is fit for thee to decide, judge mercifully and patiently to the enhancement of the praise and glory of thy crown."

Speaking of the foreigners settled in the country, he says: "The Roman empire owed its growth, and its rulers their glory and power, chiefly to the numerous wise and noble men who gathered within its boundaries from every quarter of the world. * * * Foreigners coming from different countries and places to settle here bring with them a variety of languages, customs, instructive matters, and arms, which all contribute to adorn and glorify the royal court, holding in check, at the same time, foreign powers. A country speaking but one language, and where uniform customs prevail, is weak and frail. Therefore I enjoin on thee, my son, to treat and behave towards them decorously, so that they shall more cheerfully abide with thee than elsewhere. For if thou shouldst spoil what I have built up, and scatter what I have gathered, thy realm would surely suffer great detriment from it."

The preference of Stephen for the immigrants from abroad did not degenerate into contempt for ancient customs, for he thus concludes: "It is both glorious and royal to respect the laws of the forefathers and to imitate ancestors worthy of reverence.

He who holds in contempt the decisions of his predecessors will not keep the laws of God. Conform, therefore, my dear son, to my institutions, and follow without hesitation my customs, which befit the royal dignity. It would be difficult for thee to govern a realm of this character without following the precedents laid down by those who governed before thee. Adhere, therefore, to my customs, so that thou shalt be deemed the first amongst thine, and merit the praise of the stranger. * * * The evil-minded ruler who stains himself with cruelty vainly calls himself king; he but deserves the name of a tyrant. I therefore beseech and enjoin upon thee, my beloved son, thou delight of my heart and hope of the coming generation, be, above all, gracious, not only to thy kinsmen, to princes, and to dukes, but also to thy neighbors and subjects; be merciful and forbearing not only to the powerful but to the weak; and, finally, be strong, lest good fortune elate thee, and bad fortune depress thee. Be humble, moderate, and gentle, be honorable and modest, for these virtues are the chief ornaments of the kingly crown."

But the young duke was not fated to realize the hopes of his fond father. In the very year (1031), and on the very day, say the chronicles, on which Stephen intended to have his son annointed before the nation as his successor, the mysterious edict of divine Providence suddenly took him away. In place of the crown of terrestrial power, his unstained life, nipped in the bud, was to be rewarded by the glory of everlasting salvation.

This sad blow prostrated the aged king, who had already been ailing, throwing him on his bed, and from that moment up to the day of his death he was unable to recover either his bodily or mental strength. Bereft of all hope and left to himself with his great sorrow and harassing doubts, he looked about him irresolutely for one on whose shoulders the cares of royalty should rest after his departure. The descendants of his uncle Michael were still living, and his choice fell upon them, they being rightfully entitled to succeed to the throne. But he was foiled in his intention by the opposition of the court, where the foreigners rallying round Queen Gisella had obtained the mastery, and where they now resorted to every evil scheme to compel the decrepit king to designate as his successor Duke Peter, who resided at the court, and was the son of one of the king's sisters, and Ottone Urseolo, the Doge of Venice. He finally yielded, and by this act the vessel of State which he had piloted for nearly half a century with a strong arm and great circumspection, was drawn into a most dangerous current. Stephen was the founder of the kingdom of Hungary; to others was left the inheritance of defending and strengthening it. He died in 1038 on Mary's Ascension Day, the anniversary of the same day on which, thirty-eight years before, he had placed the crown on his head. On the day of his death Stephen gathered about him his courtiers and the magnates of the land, and commended the realm to their care, but, as if distrustful of them, he, in his last prayer, placed both the church and the kingdom

founded by him under the patronage of the Holy Virgin Mary. Five centuries later Stephen was canonized and placed upon the calendar of saints by the Church of Rome, and the event of the exaltation of their first king and apostle was celebrated as a great national holiday by the people. Time has preserved St. Stephen's right hand and the crown which his piety earned for him, but the brightest and noblest monument he erected to himself is the creation of a commonwealth whose free institutions, unimpaired strength and independence have survived the storms of nearly nine centuries.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KINGS OF THE HOUSE OF ÁRPÁD.

THE crown of St. Stephen remained in the dynastic family of Árpád for three centuries. The kings of this dynasty erected, upon the foundations laid by the first great king of that house, the proud and enduring structure of the Hungarian Church and State. The liberty of the nation and the independence of the country were maintained by these rulers against the ever-recurring attacks of both the Eastern and Western empires, and the paternal meddling of the popes as well as against the barbarians invading Europe from the East, whose devastations menaced the complete destruction of every thing that lay in their path.

But while they repulsed with an ever-ready and strong arm all hostile attacks—from whatever quarter they might come—they willingly extended the right hand of friendship and hospitality to those who came to settle in the country with peaceful intentions, and brought with them the valued seeds of Western culture. The Hungarians themselves could be but with difficulty weaned from their ancient customs, and they still continued to be the martial element of the country, inured to war and laying down their

lives on fields of battle; but the populations which had emigrated from the West, protected by royal immunities, were the fathers of a busy and prosperous city-life, and laid the foundations of civilization in Hungary. A few monumental memorials, spared by the hand of time, proclaim to this day the artistic taste and wealth of those remote centuries, and the scant words to be found in ancient and decayed parchments speak loudly, and with no uncertain sound, of the cities of that time as busy marts of industrial activity and thriving commerce. From the list of the annual revenues of one of the Árpáds, Béla III., and those of the country in the twelfth century, which was submitted by him when asking for the hand of the daughter of the French king, the civilized West learned with amazement of the enormous wealth of the king ruling near the eastern confines of the Western world. The king's wealth was but a reflex of the prosperity of the people. During the era of the Árpáds Hungary surpassed many a Western country in power and wealth, and in the work of civilization either kept pace with them or faithfully followed in their footsteps. These three hundred years produced great kings, who, distinguished by their abilities, character, and achievements, made the country strong and flourishing; but this era produced also weak and frivolous rulers, whose faults will forever darken their memory. Posterity, however, cherishes the memory of all with equal piety, and is accustomed to look at the entire period in the light of the lustre of the great kings only No wonder, therefore, if the ancient chron-

iclers, in describing the events of that era, are led by their piety to weave into the text gorgeous tales and legends for the purpose of enhancing the glory of the great kings, and of palliating the shortcomings of those kings who were weak and frail.

The history of those three centuries may be divided into three periods. The first, comprising the first two centuries, may be called the heroic period of the young kingdom, in the course of which both the foreign and domestic foes were triumphantly resisted, the attacks of the neighboring nations repulsed, and the risings of paganism quelled. The second comprises the early part of the thirteenth century. During this period the royal power entered upon a state of decay, and was no longer able either to secure respect for the law or the execution of its behests. At this time too the nobility extorted from royalty a charter called the Golden Bull, confirming their immunities. During the third period an oligarchy, recruited from the ranks of the nobility, rose to power, and became the scourge of the nation, defying the royal authority and trampling upon all law. The licentiousness of this class ruined the country, which was then very near becoming a prey of the Mongols, who made an unexpected invasion. The realm, however, was saved from utter destruction by the devotion of one of her great kings and a happy conjuncture of circumstances.

The misgivings which filled Stephen's soul when he closed his eyes in eternal sleep soon proved to have been well founded. Four years had hardly elapsed after his death when the armies of the Ger-

man emperor were already marching on Hungary, and in another four years paganism arose in a formidable rebellion, with the avowed purpose of destroying the new church and kingdom.

Peter (1038–1046), Stephen's successor, who was of foreign descent and of a proud and frivolous nature, despised the rude and uncivilized Hungarians. He surrounded himself with foreigners, German and Italian immigrants, who divided amongst themselves the chief dignities of the State, preyed upon the prosperity of the country, and ruined the morals of the people. The nation did not tolerate his misrule very long. The fierce hatred and exasperation with which they looked at every thing foreign found its vent against Peter, whom they drove from the country and then elected in his place one of their own nation, Samuel Aba (1041–1044), the late king's brother-in-law. Peter did not renounce his lost power, but asked the help of the German emperor, which he readily obtained. The Emperor Henry III. opened with his German troops the way to the forfeited throne, and Samuel Aba, who marched against him, having fallen on the battlefield, Peter for the second time had the crown of St. Stephen placed on his brow, but this time he took the oath of fealty to the German emperor. Thus did Hungary for the moment become a vassal state of the German empire. But the vassalage was short, for hardly had the emperor withdrawn from the country when the passionate wrath of the nation rose higher than ever against Peter. This time, however, the wrath was not alone against his person, but menaced destruction to every

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thing opposed to the ancient order of things, and produced a bitter contest against both Christianity and the royal dignity. Peter would have fain escaped now from his persecutors, but he was captured, thrown into prison, and deprived of his sight, and then, from the depth of his misery, he vainly bewailed the giddiness which had conjured up the storm of passions that had deprived him of his throne, his eyesight, and liberty.

The leader of the pagan rebellion was Vatha. At his command firebrands were thrown into the churches and monasteries, the crosses were demolished, and every thing proclaiming the new faith was reduced to ruins; and by his advice ambassadors were sent to the dukes of the house of Árpád, who, after Stephen's death, had sought refuge in foreign countries, to summon them to return to the country and restore there the old order. King Andrew I. (1046–1061), to whom the supreme power had been offered, and who, during his exile in Russia, had married the daughter of the Prince of Kiev, immediately obeyed the summons, not, however to submit to the behests of paganism, but to rule in accordance with the principles and in the spirit of his illustrious kinsman, King Stephen. For a while, indeed, he was compelled to bear with the outbreaks, massacres, and devastations of paganism, but as soon as he felt secure in his new power, and especially after having taken up his residence in Stuhlweissenburg, then the capital of the country, where he was able to collect around him the Christian inhabitants of the West, who lived there in large numbers, he at once turned

his arms against the pagan rebels. He dispersed their armies, captured their leaders, and crushed the rebellion with merciless severity.

The double cross shone out again triumphantly, but the crown was still menaced by danger. After the defeat of paganism the Emperor Henry III. sent envoys to Andrew, asking satisfaction for the cruelties inflicted upon Peter and calling upon the king to renew the oath of fealty to the emperor of Germany. Andrew felt that unless he maintained the independence of the country, and the dignity of the crown, he incurred the risk of losing the throne itself. He therefore rejected Henry's claims and prepared for the defence of the country. At the same time he summoned home his brother Béla (Adalbert) who, during his exile in Poland, had won high distintction as a soldier, and had obtained, as a reward for his military services, the hand of a daughter of Miecislas. Andrew himself was in ill-health, and he did not care to face the brewing storm single-handed. He wanted to have at his side the powerful arm of his brave and mighty brother, whose very appearance was sufficient to inspire the distressed nation with confidence and hope. He gave Béla one third of the realm, and, being childless, promised him the crown after his decease. Neither Andrew nor the nation were disappointed in Duke Béla, who was believed by the people to be irresistible. It was in vain that Henry III. collected the entire armed force of the empire, and three times in succession (1049–1052) threw this force upon Hungary. In each campaign Duke Béla succeeded in dealing deadly

blows upon the invaders. His triumph was so complete that the emperor was compelled to solemnly proclaim peace, again acknowledging the independence of the kingdom.

The nation was not permitted long to enjoy the peace following her almost miraculous escape. Domestic dissensions took the place of the dangers threatening from abroad, and this time the feuds did not originate with the people, but with the royal family itself. All the glory of the important results of the German wars, of the driving the enemy from the country, and of her happy escape from the besetting dangers, centred in the person of Duke Béla. The nation looked with love and admiration upon the knightly form of their favorite, and his popularity was so great that it quite overshadowed that of Andrew, notwithstanding all his kingly power. Andrew's feelings were deeply hurt by the popularity of his brother, nor could he help being terrified by it. But it was not his brother's popularity alone which troubled him. During the war a son had been born to Andrew, who was christened Solomon. Andrew now repented of his promise to Béla. He wished his infant son to succeed to the throne, and in order to insure it to him, he caused Solomon to be crowned in spite of his tender age. Not satisfied with this, but fearing that Béla, aggrieved by these proceedings, might rise against Solomon at some future time, he betrothed his little son to the daughter of the recently humbled emperor, in order to secure for Solomon the powerful aid of the German empire against Béla's attacks. Every move-

ment of Andrew was dictated by fear, and he saw cause for trembling in every thing. What troubled him most was that Béla had never breathed a word about his griefs or wrongs. Andrew would often ask himself whether Béla was candid in his apparent indifference, or whether, under the cover of this calm repose, he was not concocting dangerous schemes against him and young Solomon. He determined to put Béla's candor to the proof. He had been ailing, and made his feeble condition a pretext for inviting his brother to the court. He received Béla with kindly words, confided to him his misgivings, appealed to his generosity, and repeatedly assured him that he did not intend to defraud him of his rights by the acts done in favor of his son Solomon. Andrew concluded by saying that he left it to Béla to decide whether he would rather succeed to the throne after his own death, or be satisfied to remain at the side of young Solomon as the military chief of the nation and the protector of the realm. The old chronicles relate that Andrew, having finished his sweet speech, caused to be placed before Béla the royal crown and a sword, calling upon him to choose between the two. "I take the sword," exclaimed Béla, unable to conceal his indignation, "for if I coveted the crown, I could always obtain it with the sword."

The feud between the two brothers became henceforth irreconcilable. The nation sided with Béla. The emperor spoken of before was dead, and a boy occupied the German throne. Andrew had sent his queen and young son some time before to the Ger-

man court, and now he marched against Béla, who was prepared to meet him. The two brothers confronted each other near the Theiss, and Andrew lost both the battle and his life, whilst Béla was on the field of battle proclaimed king of the realm.

Béla and his family occupy a conspicuous place in the history of the first century of the Hungarian kingdom. He himself, two of his sons, and one of his grandsons were destined to successfully defend the country, to pacify the nation, and, pursuing the work of Stephen, to complete the creations of that great king. They were all endowed with eminent qualities befitting the great task allotted to them. The heroism, devotion, and wisdom of the father descended to the children, in whose character the inherited virtues shone out with even a brighter and purer light. They were zealous guardians of their kingdom and devout Christians, and they were wedded, heart and soul, to their nation, which beheld in its kings with feelings of delight the embodiment of its own best qualities. The imagination of the people soars towards them after the lapse of so many centuries, and loves to make their lofty forms the heroes of fabulous legends. Hence it is that the events recorded of them in the pages of the chronicles are nearly choked up by the ever-gorgeous poetical creations of the imagination of the people.

The reign of Béla I. was short (1061–1063), but even during this brief period he succeeded in rendering important services to his country. While he was king paganism once more reared its crest under the lead of James, son of the Vatha who had been

put to death during Andrew's reign. James stirred up the multitude against Christianity and royalty, but Béla nipped the rising in the bud. This last attempt of paganism having failed, its power was completely broken, and it finally lost entirely its hold upon the imagination and passions of the people. Some there were yet who continued to resort secretly to the sacred places in the groves, but their persecutors traced them even to these hallowed spots, until, at last, the sacred fire burning on the secretly elevated and visited altars was completely extinguished by the laws enacted under Kings Ladislaus and Coloman. The imperial court of Germany made strenuous efforts to place Solomon, whom it had received under its protection, upon the throne of St. Stephen. Armies were collected and marched against Hungary in the hope of being able at last to assert the imperial supremacy over the kingdom which had been hitherto so unsuccessfully proclaimed. The nation shrank from young Solomon, who was badly brought up and frivolous, and in whom they saw only the tool of the German power. The voice of the people designated amongst Béla's chivalrous sons either the righteous Geyza or the brave and pure Ladislaus, as the princes best fitted for the crown.

These generous princes, however, desiring to save their country from the calamities of an attack by the Germans, abdicated their power in favor of young Solomon, and gave him a friendly reception on his ascending the throne, stipulating only this, that their cousin should leave them undisturbed in the posses-

sion of their paternal inheritance, which comprised about one third of the realm. Solomon (1063–1074) promised every thing and kept nothing. He was distrustful of his cousins, perceiving that the nation idolized them, and bowed down before him only from compulsion. It was in vain that his royal kinsmen supported him with an unselfishness almost touching, and strove hard to lend him the lustre of their own popularity in order to obtain favor for him in the eyes of the nation. Solomon persisted in seeing in them his rivals, from whose grasp his crown was not safe, and not his brothers, the upholders and guardians of his royal power. The foreign advisers poisoned the mind of the wavering and fickle king against his young kinsmen, not because they doubted the unselfishness of their devotion, but because his civil counsellors well knew that the two brothers were sworn enemies of German expansion and supremacy. The chronicles of the country abound in praise of the heroic deeds performed by Solomon in conjunction with his cousins while he lived in harmony with them, and in accounts of the intrigues which disturbed that harmony, and finally led to their utter estrangement from each other. The foreign counsellors of Solomon succeeded in working upon his fears and jealousy to such an extent that they finally prevailed upon the king to hire assassins to do away with Duke Geyza. The trap was laid but the victim for whom it was destined succeeded in making his escape. The feud of the fathers revived in their sons, and King Solomon and the dukes Geyza and Ladislaus confronted each

other in the same hostile spirit in which their fathers, Andrew and Béla, had once stood face to face. The question which the sword was to decide was not merely whose should be the crown, but as to whether the German power should become the master of the Hungarian kingdom, or not. Fate decided against Solomon. He lost the battle of Mogyoród, and with it his throne, and with his defeat vanished all hopes of establishing German supremacy over Hungary.

The vacant throne was filled first by Geyza (1074–1077), and, after his short reign, by his brother Ladislaus. Solomon escaped, and turned now to his imperial brother-in-law, Henry IV., now again to the adversary of the latter, Pope Gregory VII., for help, moving heaven and earth to regain his lost throne. It was all in vain, the mischief was done and could be remedied no more. The chroniclers delight in adorning the story of the erratic life and repentance of the unfortunate youth. They relate of him that, perceiving the utter failure of all his attempts, he was filled with loathing against himself and the blind passions which had made him the enemy and scourge of his country, retired from the world, and became a hermit in order to atone for the faults of his brief youth by doing penance during the remaining years of his life. A cave on the shores of the Adriatic, near Pola, is pointed out to this day, in which Solomon is supposed to have led the life of a hermit. The chronicle adds that he lived to a high old age, became the benefactor of the inhabitants of the vicinity, prayed for his nation, and that the last wish

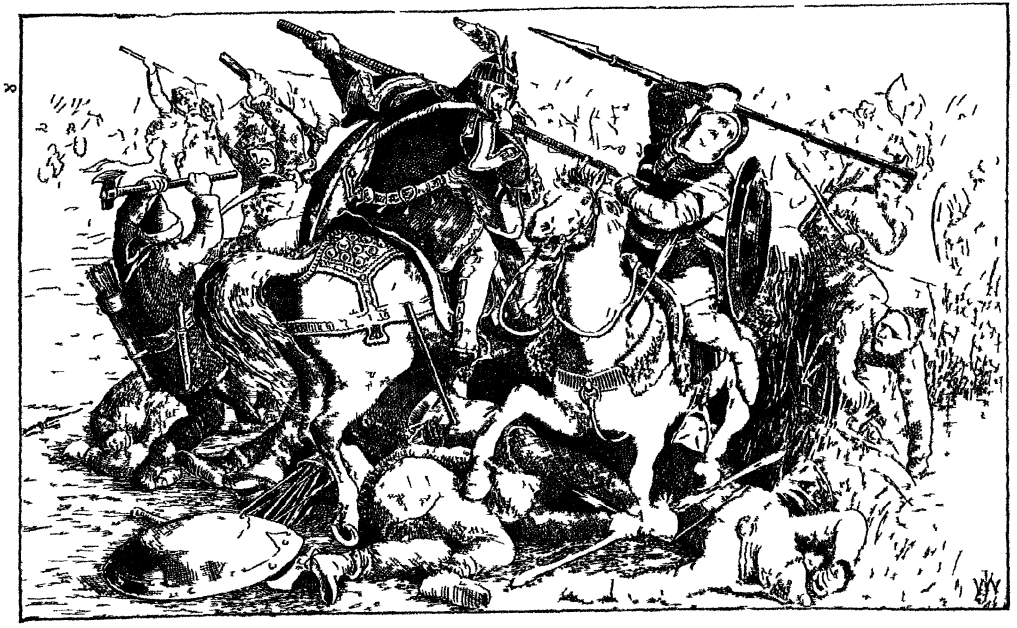
of his departing soul was the happiness of his country.

Ladislaus (1077–1095), who succeeded his older brother Geyza, was one of the noblest, most noteworthy of the kings of the royal line of the Árpáds. He was great not only in the light of the important achievements of his reign, but by his eminent personal qualities. His character was a happy combination of strength without violence, of wisdom without vacillation, of piety without fanaticism, and of lofty majesty without pride. He was the hero, the model, and the idol of his nation, which had never clung to any of its kings with more boundless affection, greater devotion, and more respect. He identified himself with the nation, drew strength from her affection for him, and rendered her powerful in return. He gave the kingdom, founded by his illustrious ancestor, a permanent peace, restored the faith in its strength, and insured its development. He put an end to the era of attacks from the West, and even intervened in the troubles of Germany by siding with the papal party against Henry IV. An ancient chronicler informs us that he had been offered the crown of Germany but refused to accept it, because "he wished to be nothing but a Hungarian." Although he aided the popes in their contest with Germany, he yet defended the interests of the kingdom against papal pretensions. Pope Gregory VII. having reminded him that the Hungarian kings had obtained their crown from one of his predecessors, Sylvester II., and that it was fitting therefore that they should submit to the supremacy of the Pope, Ladislaus re-

plied, in a letter sent to the Pope, that "he was ready to obey with filial submission and with his whole heart the holy see, as an ecclesiastical power, and his holiness the Pope, as his spiritual father, but that he would not subordinate the independence of his realm to anybody or any thing." Nor did the king in his acts deviate from his professions, and the popes prized his alliance too highly to find it advisable to turn his friendship into enmity by forcing upon him their supremacy.

Ladislaus was not satisfied to merely defend his people and country against hostile attacks; he exerted himself to increase the population and to add to the territory. Under him Croatia was added to the kingdom (1089), and, having founded a bishopric at Agram, he spread the Christian faith amongst the Croatians and organized their church. About the same time, the Kuns (Cumans), having invaded the country from the East, Ladislaus routed them, and, making a great number of captives amongst them, he colonized with these prisoners the lowlands of the Theiss. Croatia is still a member of the realm of St. Stephen, and the Kuns have been entirely absorbed by the Hungarian element, sharing the weal and woe of the latter. History has preserved in the fragments of the laws enacted by him clear proofs of the greatness of Ladislaus in the affairs of peace; a severe judge and wise leader, he defended with his sword the blessed seeds planted by him in time of peace. He compelled the people to settle down permanently, and taught them by severe penalties to respect the persons and property

of others. He visited with severe punishment the followers of ancient paganism, and overwhelmed the Christian church with benefits. It was at his request that Stephen, his son Emeric, and the martyred bishop Gerhard, Duke Emeric's tutor, were canonized and placed upon the list of saints by the Church of Rome. We need not wonder, therefore, if, confronted with such grandeur and majesty, posterity abstained from applying to him human standards, and loved to see in his acts the manifestations of a higher and a divine power. Thus the chronicler speaking of him says with deep emotion: "He was rich in love, abounding in patience, cheerful in his graciousness, overflowing in the gifts of grace, the promoter of justice, the patron of modesty, the guardian of the deserted, and the helper of the poor and distressed. Divine mercy raised him in the gifts of nature above the common worth of man, for he was brave, strong of arm, and pleasant to the sight; his whole appearance was marked by leonine strength and majesty, he was so tall of stature that his shoulders were visible above those about him, and, blessed with the fulness of divine gifts, his aspect proclaimed him to have been created to be a king." His mortal remains lie enshrined in the cathedral of Grosswardein (Nagyvarad) which was built by his munificence, and the piety of the nation has made of the place of his burial a miracle working resort for devout pilgrims. A pious tradition has lived for centuries amongst the people, that whenever danger menaces the country the king leaves his bed of stone and, followed by the invisible hosts of



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his departed braves, combats against the assailants of his country.

Ladislaus was still living when the religious movement which took the form of a holy warfare began to agitate the west of Europe—a movement which was destined to maintain its hold upon the minds of the inhabitants of the western world for two hundred years. According to a tradition of the nation, Ladislaus was offered, as the most chivalrous king, the chief command over the western Knights and crusading armies, but was prevented by death from assuming the leadership. Most of the crusaders went eastward by the valley of the Danube, passing through Hungary, and the waves of the first expedition reached the country during the reign of Coloman (1095–1114), the successor of Ladislaus. It was fortunate for the country that a king like Coloman kept guard at this time over her frontiers; a king who, although he may have lacked the ideal qualities of his predecessor, possessed both the strength and the courage to protect and defend the realm. Although he was well aware that his attitude would provoke the anger of the popes and place him in opposition to the public opinion of the whole Christian world, he was not deterred from mercilessly driving away from the borders of the country the first motley host of unruly and lawless crusaders that approached them. The only crusaders to whom he gave a friendly reception, permitting them to pass through the country, were the troops of Godfrey of Bouillon, but even as to these, he exacted the most rigorous security for their good behaviour. Coloman's firm-

ness alone saved the country from being engulfed by the movement, and prevented its domestic peace, which was not as yet firmly established, from being disturbed.

But while he was thus guarding the interests of the country with a watchful eye, an unmoved heart, and a strong arm, he still found time and opportunity for increasing the territory of the realm. He completed in Croatia the conquests begun by Ladislaus, and added to the new acquisition Dalmatia, which he wrested from the grasp of the Venetian republic. Coloman was the first Hungarian king who styled himself King of Croatia and Dalmatia.

Coloman won the admiration of his contemporaries and posterity, not merely as a leader of armies, but as a ruler whose great erudition and wise laws served to perpetuate his memory. These qualities obtained for him the epithet "*Konyves*" (bookish) or learned King Coloman. The chronicles extol him for putting a stop by process of law to the prosecution of witches, and for declaring in one of his laws: "Of witches who do not exist at all no mention shall be made." He bestowed great care upon the administration of justice, and among his laws occurs the following admirable direction given to the judges: "Every thing must be so cautiously and anxiously weighed on the scale of justice, that innocence, on the one hand, shall not be condemned from hatred, and, on the other, sin shall not be protected through friendship."

The last years of Coloman's reign were embittered by the ambition of his brother Álmos, who coveted

the throne. The energetic and erudite king, who had spent his whole life in consolidating the glorious work begun by Stephen, saw with a sorrowing heart how the restless ambition of single individuals was uprooting the plants he had so carefully nursed. Duke Álmos rose three times in rebellion against his royal brother, nor did he reject, on these occasions, foreign aid. Coloman defeated him each time, and pardoned him each time. But seeing that the incorrigible duke could not be restrained by either his power or his magnanimity, and that he was again collecting an army against him, Coloman caused Álmos and his young son Béla to be thrown into prison, where both were deprived of their sight. This dark and cruel deed, the ferocity of which can be palliated only by the rudeness of the age, was Coloman's last act, and, in thinking of the retribution of the life to come, it could not fail to disturb his peaceful descent into the grave.

The risings of Álmos initiated that period of civil strife which continued for two hundred years, until the house of the Árpáds became extinct, and which, on the one hand, afforded the Greek emperors an opportunity to meddle with the affairs of the country, and to attempt the extension of their supremacy over the kingdom; and, on the other hand, undermined the authority of royalty, lifted the oligarchs into power, and sapped the foundations of the institutions established by Stephen.

Álmos, the blinded duke, planned again a rising against Coloman's son and successor, Stephen II. (1114–1131), but the plot having been discovered he

fled to the Greek court for protection and aid. The Hungarian and Greek armies were already confronting each other on the banks of the lower Danube, but the shedding of blood was prevented on this occasion by the sudden death of Duke Álmos.

His son Béla II. (1131–1141), who had also been made blind, ascended the throne after the death of Stephen II., but he gave no thought to pacifying the restlessness of the people or to restoring peace to the country. One feeling alone held the mastery over his soul, shrouded in darkness—that of vindictiveness against those who had robbed him and his father of the light of day. His revengeful feelings were still more fanned by his masculine queen, Ilona, the daughter of the prince of Servia, by whose advice he summoned the diet to meet in Arad, on the southern confines of the country, for the sole purpose of avenging himself on this occasion. The lords, anticipating no evil, assembled in large numbers, although there were many among them who might have had good reasons for dreading the king's wrath. They came, however, confiding in the forgiveness of Béla, which had been publicly proclaimed by him. According to the information gleaned from the chronicles, the diet was opened by Queen Ilona herself, who, after describing in a passionate strain the sad fate of her blinded husband, and inveighing against the crime of those who were the causers of his affliction, herself gave the signal for the awful work of vengeance. A dreadful struggle ensued between the adherents of the king and those who had been singled out by the court as victims.

Many remained dead in the hall of the diet which had thus been changed into a battlefield, but many others, who succeeded in escaping, took away with their wounds feelings of undying hatred against their king. These bloody proceedings gave the disaffected a fresh cause for placing their hopes in the Greek court, and expecting from that quarter relief from the tyranny which oppressed them.

But when open hostilities finally broke out between the two nations, Béla II. was no more among the living. When the war commenced, Geyza II. (1141–1161), the son of Béla, sat on the Hungarian throne, which the Emperor Manuel, the most powerful of the Comneni, ruled in Constantinople. The war was a protracted one, and its scene was chiefly on the southern frontier, along the course of the Danube and the country near the Save, but Manuel, with all his power and wariness, was unable to obtain an advantage over the younger and more energetic neighbor. After the death of Geyza, his son Stephen III. succeeded to the throne. The Greek emperor refused to recognize him as the king of Hungary, and attempted to place upon the throne as his vassals, successively, the two brothers of Geyza who had found a refuge at his court, but he did not succeed with either of the pretenders. One of his protégés died young, while the other was driven from the country by the lawfully elected king Stephen III.

Manuel, seeing all his schemes overthrown, and perceiving that, as an enemy, he had utterly failed, pretended now to feelings of friendship, and offered peace to the Hungarians. As a further pledge of

peace he requested King Stephen III. to permit his brother Béla to reside with him at Constantinople, promising that he would adopt him as his son and heir. Manuel, having no sons to whom he might leave the imperial throne, in all probability secretly cherished the hope that his adopted son would at some future day succeed to the Greek throne, and would also inherit the crown of St. Stephen, and that by this means the two neighboring countries, which he did not succeed in uniting by force of arms, would, in the course of time, become one. Fate, however, seemed to have conspired to frustrate the best laid plans of the Greek emperor. He carried Duke Béla with him to Constantinople, adopted him as his son, declared him his heir, and every thing appeared to point to a happy realization of his ambitious dreams, when unexpectedly a son was born to him, an event which completely upset his calculations. It became now impossible for Manuel to continue to keep the young Hungarian duke at his court, unless, indeed, he wanted to raise a rival to his own son; he, therefore, deprived him of all the distinctions he had heaped upon him, and sent him hurriedly back to his native country, where the throne had just become vacant by the death of Stephen III. Manuel, however, made the young duke take a solemn oath before he allowed him to depart that he would never attack the Greek empire, and this empty formality was all that he was able to achieve in furtherance of his scheme to impose his supremacy upon Hungary. The same duke, however, who had been nurtured in the culture of

Greece, and became King of Hungary as Béla III., completely banished Greek influence from the country, and secured its independence for a long time to come.

Béla III. (1173–1196) was one of the most powerful and respected rulers of Hungary. He possessed great kingly qualities, and his character commanded universal respect. He had a great deal to contend with, after his return from Constantinople, before he succeeded in being firmly seated on his throne. He was received with feelings of suspicion by the powerful nobility, the chief dignitaries of the church, and by the queen-mother herself, who all looked upon him as a partisan of the eastern despotism, and as an enemy to the Roman Catholic Church, and who were anxious to place his brother Geyza upon the throne. Béla triumphed before long over all his enemies. He had his brother thrown into prison, sent his mother into exile, restrained and humiliated the powerful oligarchs, and conciliated the friendship of the high prelacy by his munificence and liberality towards the church of the country. Having restored order at home, he devoted himself to the task of obtaining again possession of the territory Manuel had seized. The reconquering of the Dalmatian seashore involved him in a war with Venice, the envious rival of the Hungarian kingdom, in the course of which Béla had occasion to give proof of his military power on a new scene of action, where the valor of his ancestors had never had an opportunity of shining, by achieving over the proud republic a great triumph on the sea. Béla had learned a great deal

at the Greek court, but all his valuable acquirements he employed for the advantage of his country. He did not exactly open new avenues for the development of the nation ; his chief merit consisted rather in leading her back to the road marked out by Stephen, and successfully pursued by King Ladislaus and King Coloman. His every effort tended to bring the nation closer to that western civilization which had fostered her tender beginnings, and the rejection of which all this time would have amounted to a stultification of her past, and a certain risk of her future. Two things, however, were of paramount necessity to enable the people to prosper by the king's judicious exertions in this direction : to restore to the country the needful rest she had not now enjoyed for half a century, and to reestablish order within the kingdom, torn by the partisanship of the last fifty years. Béla resolutely set to the task of establishing peace and order. He relentlessly pursued the thieves and robbers who rendered life and property insecure and had increased to a frightful extent since Coloman's time, and, in order to do it more effectually, he appointed special officers in every county for that purpose, establishing, at the same time, a royal chancery at the court with a view to giving greater effect to the government of the country and the administration of justice. The proceedings in important affairs of state or private law-suits taken before the king—which hitherto had been oral—now had to be carried on in writing. The country, under Béla's well-ordered government, became more prosperous, and the nation more

polished. Béla's first wife was a Greek princess, and his second a French princess. Both the queens, with the retinues following them to the court, introduced there the good taste, culture, and manners of the Greeks and French, so that a German chronicler happening to visit the court at that time, could not find adequate words to extol its magnificent splendors. Culture was not confined to the court; it spread to the nation itself, for we find that the university, recently established in Paris, was attended by a number of Hungarian youths. All the acts of Béla indicate that he had selected for his model in government one of his most distinguished ancestors, Ladislaus, for whom, as an expression of his own and the nation's piety, he had also, in 1192, secured a place on the list of saints recognized by the Church of Rome.

Béla, while thus advancing the interests of the kingdom and the nation, did not lose sight of the claims of the age upon kings and rulers to support the holy wars waged by Christendom against the infidels. He followed with sympathy the movements of the crusaders, and upon Jerusalem's falling into the hands of the infidels in 1187, he planned himself to lead an army for the purpose of reconquering the holy city. The third crusade was begun in 1189, and the German forces, under the lead of the emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, passed on their way to the Holy Land through Hungary. Béla received his distinguished guest with royal pomp, abundantly provided the German troops with every thing necessary, but he himself did not join the crusaders.

What the circumstances were that prevented the king from taking part in the crusades it would be difficult now to determine, but that they must have been weighty ones is amply proved by the fact that he had been long preparing for a crusading campaign, and had for that purpose collected a great deal of treasure. The idea was present before his mind at the time of his death, for he directed that his elder son, Emeric, should succeed him on the throne, and the younger, Duke Andrew, should inherit the treasure collected for the pious object, and employ it in the carrying out of the paternal intentions. Béla's fate had that in common with the fate of the most conspicuous kings of Hungary—that posterity praised his grand achievements, while his own children failed to respect and preserve the inheritance left to them by a distinguished sire.

The feud between the two brothers broke out immediately after the death of Béla III. Andrew collected troops for the pretended purpose of executing the last will of his father, but in reality to employ them against his own brother. He succeeded in defeating the army of King Emeric, who was taken unawares, and was, besides, vacillating and incapable, and, after occupying Croatia and Dalmatia, to which he added fresh territory, he proclaimed himself, in 1198, Duke of Croatia, Dalmatia, Rama, and Chulmia (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Emeric vainly urged Innocent III., the most powerful pope since Gregory VII., to compel the rebellious duke to carry out the pious vows of his father. Andrew did not stir one step towards the Holy Land, but,

persevering in his sinful perverseness, continued to repeat his attacks against the lawful king. At last, during one of his outbreaks, he was overtaken by an avenging Nemesis.

The armies of the two brothers confronted each other on the banks of the Drave. The camp of Andrew was stirring with a strong and numerous army which, in anticipation of a certain victory, was loudly revelling and making merry. King Emeric's eyes sadly surveyed his own scant following, whose devotion and determination, great as they were, did not seem sufficient to make up for the deficiency in numbers. The collision between the opposing armies was inevitable, and the king felt that his utter discomfiture would be the result of the battle. His desperate condition inspired him with a sudden resolution, and, without communicating his intention to any one, he went into the enemy's camp, dressed in kingly state, and, sceptre in hand, made straight for his brother's tent. The revelling warriors, in surprise, were struck with awe at the marvellous spectacle suddenly bursting in upon their dazed eyes. "I wish to see the man who will dare to raise a sinful arm against his king and master," were the magic words which opened him the way through the gaping multitude. Upon arriving in his brother's tent he seized the rebellious duke's hands and led him captive to his own camp. The above narrative of the event, as gleaned from the chronicles, may not agree in every particular with the actual occurrence, but Duke Andrew became the king's prisoner, and remained captive until the latter called him to his

deathbed, generously confiding to his care his infant son, Ladislaus, who had already been crowned king.

Andrew proved as faithless a guardian as he had been a false brother. He could not restrain his ambition, but deprived Ladislaus of his crown, and drove him and his mother from the court. Shortly afterwards, the unhappy youth died, and Andrew could, at last, in 1205, ascend the throne he had so long coveted, and whose possession he had attempted to achieve by means in the choice of which he never consulted his conscience.

The reign of Andrew II. (1205–1235) deserves a conspicuous place in the history of Hungary, not for its beneficence, but for its weakness and shortcomings. The never-ending civil wars of the last century, especially the internecine struggle between the two brothers, had the effect of weakening the kingdom, lowering the royal power and authority, and, as a consequence of the decay of the latter, of increasing the overbearing spirit of the oligarchs. Andrew II. could not escape the condign punishment brought upon himself by his own acts. His whole reign was a series of feeble attempts to free himself from the entangling web caused by his own faults and the licentiousness of the oligarchy. He presented the spectacle of a man whose ambition was greater than his abilities, and whose levity equalled his ambition. In the beginning of his reign he was completely under the influence of his wife, Gertrude, who was of Tyrolese descent, and who suffered the country to become a prey to her foreign relations and favorites. Yet when the great and powerful

lords rose against the plundering foreigners, the licentious court, and the tyrannical and wicked queen, killing the latter in her own palace, Andrew had neither the courage nor the power to exert his royal authority against the rebels, but was rather glad that the storm had passed over his head and had not singled him out for its victim. Instead of resenting the injury done to him, he conciliated his enemies by presents and gifts, and indulged in schemes of a new matrimonial alliance. He was fond of pomp, splendor, generous expenditure, and the ostentatious display of the court, but the royal revenues soon proved inadequate to pay the sums thus squandered, reduced as the royal domains had been by grants of entire counties. The king, in order to raise the revenues, mortgaged the imposts and tolls, and, by debasing the coinage, dishonestly added to his resources. The din of the revels of the court prevented the loud complaints of the people, who were oppressed and worried in a thousand ways by the oligarchs and the tax- and toll-gatherers, from reaching the ears of the king. At times his restlessness and ambition still involved him in adventurous enterprises. Thus he wished to elevate his son, Duke Béla, to the throne of Galicia, but lacked the strength to accomplish his scheme. The campaign against Galicia only added to the expenditures of the country, and, indeed, it happened that the king with his son and the whole army were in the most imminent danger of destruction. His mind was also disturbed by his failure to carry out the wishes of his father, and, at last, he

determined, in 1217, to march an army to the Holy Land. In order to raise the money necessary for the campaign he plundered the churches and monasteries, and sold to Venice the city of Zara, the bulwark of the Dalmatian seashore. He finally left the country with the army thus collected, but while he was roaming about in the Holy Land without aim or purpose, the orphaned country was reduced to the brink of misery. "When we returned home from our expedition," complained the king himself, in a letter addressed to the holy see, "we found that both the clergy and the laymen had been guilty of wickedness such as surpasses all imagination. All the treasure of the country we found squandered, and fifteen years will not suffice to restore our land to her former better condition." The condition of the country must have been sad, indeed, if the state the king had left her in might be called good in comparison with it, and however heavily the responsibility of the fresh calamities rested upon the king, his truthfulness in this instance cannot be doubted.

The gloomy rule of Andrew II. was relieved by one cheering event which contained the germ of a better future. The gentry, comprising in its ranks the largest part of the freeholders of the country, unable to bear longer the weak government of the king, the violence of the oligarchy, and the scourge of the army of extortionate gatherers of taxes and tolls, at last lifted their heads and asked the throne to listen to their complaints and to remedy their wrongs. Béla himself, the king's son, whom Andrew II. had caused to be crowned before going to the

Holy Land, was the leader and spokesman of the nobility, who had stood up in defence of the sacredness of the constitution, and who now urged the return to the rule of law in the land.

Their wrongs, and the remedies exacted by the gentry were set forth in the following strain: The king should not, at the expense of the patriots, bestow favors upon foreigners, nor elevate them to dignities, and distribute among them the domains of the country; entire counties or dignities of state should not, as a practice, be granted in pepetuity, and he should not suffer avaricious nobles to grasp a greater number of offices than they could efficiently administer. He should guard the ancient immunities of the nobles, so that they might freely dispose of their property, and not be molested in their persons without lawful judgment, and should not be burdened with taxes or extortionate exactions of any kind. He should take care that the tax- and toll-gatherers and other officials be taken from the ranks of the gentry, and should remove from his service the Ishmaelites and the Jews. Every thing opposed to these requirements he should at once bring to an end. The county estates, granted away to the injury of the land or dishonestly obtained, should be taken back by the king, and he should, in pursuance of the ancient custom of the country, every year, on St. Stephen's day, convoke the diet, whose duty it was to act upon the complaints of the nation and to defend her liberty when attacked.

The king, however, moved neither by the voice of truth, nor by the misery of his people, refused to ac-

cede to these requests. In the breast of Andrew II., who, during his whole reign, had utterly neglected the duties coupled with his exalted station, awoke on the present occasion a feeling of injured royal dignity. But the gentry were determined to enforce their demands, and, gathering around the heir to the throne, they took up arms in order to obtain by force the concessions they deemed necessary for the good of the country. Father and son with their armies were already confronting each other, when the chief prelates interfered, and prevailed upon Andrew to listen to the wishes of the gentry. The concessions were drawn up in form of a royal letter and the king bound himself and his successors by oath to observe the stipulations contained in it. Posterity has given this royal letter the name of the *Golden Bull*, owing to the fact that the seal appended to it by a silk string rests in a box made of gold.

This remarkable document, which terminated the internal strife extending over a period of a hundred years, and to which for six centuries the past generations of Hungary were in the habit of proudly referring as the foundation of the constitution of the Hungarian nobility, reads, omitting passages of minor importance, as follows:

"In the name of the Holy Trinity and of the indivisible Unity, Andrew, by the grace of God, hereditary king of Hungary, Dalmatia, Croatia, Rama, Servia, and Galicia: Whereas the nobles and others in our realm have suffered detriment in many parts of their liberties, as established by King St. Stephen, through the power of some kings —who, either from anger revenged themselves, or listened to the counsels of wicked advisers, or sought their own advantage,—and our nobles have frequently appealed to our Majesty's and our ancestors'

ears with petitions and complaints concerning the amelioration of our land—we, therefore, as in duty bound, desirous of satisfying their request, grant to them as well as to the other inhabitants of our realm the liberty granted by the sacred king, and we further ordain other matters pertaining to the improvement of the land in this wise: We ordain that we are bound annually to celebrate the day of the sacred king at Stuhlweissenburg and that, if we should be prevented from being present, the palatine shall be there in our place and shall hear the causes as our representative, and all the nobles may freely assemble there according to their pleasure. It is also our will, that neither we nor our successors shall detain or oppress the nobles on account of any powerful person, unless they be first summoned and sentenced by due process of law. Further we shall not cause taxes to be collected on the estates of the nobles or of the clergy of the Church. If a noble shall die without male issue his daughter shall be entitled to one fourth of his property; as to the rest he may dispose of it as he pleases, and if death should intervene before his doing so it shall descend to his nearer relatives, and if he is absolutely without kin then the inheritance shall go to the king. If the king is desirous of taking troops out of the country the nobles shall not be bound to go with him unless at his expense; if, however, an army should invade the country all the nobles are bound to go. The palatine shall be judge over all the people of our realm without distinction; but in capital cases and matters of property which concern the nobles the palatine shall not decide without the king's knowledge. If foreigners come to the country they shall not be elevated to dignities without the consent of the council of the realm; land shall not be given to those who are strangers to the realm. The king shall not grant entire counties or offices of any kind in perpetuity. Officers of the treasury, salt bureaux, and customs must be nobles of our realm; Ishmaelites and Jews shall be incapable of holding such offices. Excepting these four great lords, the palatine, the banus, the court judges of the king and queen, no one shall have two dignities at the same time. Should, however, we, or any of our successors, at any time be disposed to infringe upon any of these our orders, the bishops as well as the other lords and the nobles of the realm, shall be at liberty, jointly or singly, by virtue of this letter, to oppose and contradict us and our successors, forever, without incurring the penalty of treason. Given by the hand of Kletus, the chancellor of our court, in the year of grace one thousand two hundred and twenty-two."

King Andrew, who had to be compelled by force to issue the Golden Bull, could, however, not be coerced by any power to observe the promises he had made therein. The exertions of the heir presumptive and the nobility as well as the wrath of the pope were of no avail. Nine years later he confirmed its contents by a fresh oath, but hardly two years elapsed when he incurred the curse of Rome for again disregarding his oath. Struggles, extending over many centuries, were necessary to realize the words of the Golden Bull. Time had then already effaced the memory of Andrew's follies and frailties, and posterity saw him only in the reflected light of the great concessions made by his royal missive. The estates of the diet which met at Rákos in 1505 spoke of him in terms of extravagant praise as the king "who had made the Hungarians great and glorious, and had raised their fame to the very stars."

The struggles which resulted in the issuing of the Golden Bull were by no means over. The nobility had obtained from royalty the concession of their rights, but were lacking the power to maintain them, and to secure their permanency. The very charter of their liberties furnished matter for fresh disputes and dissensions. In these contests, however, the nobility now seldom attacked royalty, the weakening of which would have proved injurious to their own interests, but they usually allied themselves with the kings against the oligarchs, who treated with contempt both law and right, having no need of the protection of either, and who indulged in

tyrannical violence against the throne as well as the nation. The licentiousness and increasing power of the oligarchs were the sore spot in the body politic during the period of the last Árpáds, and in a greater and lesser degree, now apparently healed, now more envenomed than ever, it continued to be for centuries a disturbing element in the public life of the country.

The struggle between royalty, supported by the nation, and the unruly great lords had just commenced, when the storm of the Mongol invasion broke loose upon the country, shaking it to its very foundations. When the storm subsided only the weak ones were found to have suffered, the strong ones came out of the nation's calamity more powerful than ever. The national misfortunes only served to advance the interests of the oligarchs, who, about this time, began more frequently to surround the crests of the mountains with stone walls, and, dwelling in their rocky nests, defied royalty with increasing boldness, and oppressed the people with greater impunity than ever. The chroniclers in recalling this period mourn with bitter wailing the gloom which had settled upon the country, the incapacity of the kings, the pride and violence of the lords, and the miserable condition of the people. That the power of the nation was not entirely gone, however, was shown by the cheering fact, casting a ray of light into the gloom of those days, that at the very time when the authority of royalty had sunk to the lowest ebb, the Hungarian arms were able to cope with the powerful Slavic empire ruled by Ottokar,

king of Bohemia, and to assist in establishing the power of the Hapsburgs. Unfortunately the national strength was for the most part divided against itself, and the very triumph of the Hungarian arms against Ottokar proved injurious to the nation at large, for it redounded only to the glory of the oligarchy, and tended to confirm their power.

After the death of Andrew II., his son, Bela IV. (1235–1270), devoted himself with youthful energy to the task of restoring the ascendancy of the royal power and authority, of insuring respect to the laws, and of humbling the pride of the oligarchy. He removed the evil counsellors of his father, sent the principal ringleaders to prison, surrounded himself with good patriots, and where gentle words proved inefficacious he resorted to arms in order to obtain possession of the royal domains and county lands which single oligarchs had contrived to acquire by grant during his father's life or from his ancestors, or which had been lawlessly appropriated by them. The efforts made by the youthful king were, however, of no avail. The very successes which attended here and there his policy served only to excite to a higher pitch the anger and resentment of the great lords, and deepened the estrangement between them and the throne. The disaffected oligarchs, whose selfishness was not tempered by patriotism, and whose passions did not know the bridle of the law, were so base as to elevate a foreign prince, Duke Frederic of Austria, to the throne, in opposition to their lawful king. The watchfulness of Béla alone prevented the royal inheritance from passing,

at that time already, from the Árpáds into foreign hands. Bela succeeded in driving back Frederic, and in defeating the treasonable schemes of the oligarchy, but he became, at the same time, convinced that until he was able to present to the opposing lords a more formidable front he would have to renounce the realization of the fond hopes of his youth.

Bela looked about him for fresh resources to strengthen his authority and to add to his power. Pious Dominican monks, just then returning to the country from the regions of the Volga, told the tale that in the far east, along the banks of that river, they met with that fraction of the Hungarians who, during the period preceding the occupation of Hungary, had parted from their brethren near the Black Sea, where the latter continued their march westward. These accounts suggested to Béla the scheme of inviting the distant Eastern brothers to settle in his realm, hoping to augment the royal power by the aid of the new settlers, and to be thus enabled to resume successfully his contest with the proud lords. This scheme, however, failed, but the same circumstances which frustrated his plans as to his countrymen near the Volga, assisted him in obtaining aid from another quarter. The Mongol hordes, which came rushing from Central Asia toward the western world, swept in their impetuous onward march the Hungarians near the Volga out of existance ; but the same wild current drove also the Kuns (Cumans) out of their habitations near the Black Sea, and the latter, after having roamed about homeless for a time, and

then reached the frontiers of Hungary, begged of King Béla to allow them to come into the country and to settle there. Forty thousand families were in search of a new country, and forty thousand fierce warriors offered their services to King Béla. The people of Hungary were averse to receiving immigration on so large a scale, and the great lords loudly protested against the reception of the new comers, being convinced that the latter would only enhance the king's power, and become instrumental in humbling their order. The king, however, considering the good of the country only, braved the opposition, and admitting Kuthen, king of the Kuns, with his people, into the land, assigned to them as their future abode the plain of the Theiss. Nor did he forget to make their conversion to Christianity a condition of their admission. The good effects Bela had anticipated from his new colony were slow in showing themselves, but the evil consequences of the recent settlement became manifest at once. The great numbers of this rude and barbarous element, who were as little disposed to live in fixed habitations as to embrace Christianity, soon disgusted the people by their lawlessness, violence, unruliness, and the devastations committed by them amongst the Hungarian population. The complaints of all classes, without distinction, which reached the king's ear, became daily louder. Béla was unable to come to the relief of the people, for to have turned against the Kuns, as he was asked to do, would have shaken them in their fidelity to him. But by showing a preference for the new comers he also forfeited the

affection of his old adherents, the good patriots who had firmly stood by him, hitherto, in all his troubles. Dissensions arose between the king, who was animated by the purest intentions, and his people, who were unable to fathom the patriotic motives of his actions; and they were at their highest when the hurricane which had swept away the Hungarians on the banks of the Volga, and driven the Kuns to the plains of the Theiss, reached at last the crests of the Carpathian mountains.

The successors of Jenghis Khan, wishing to extend the frontiers of their vast Asiatic empire toward the west, crossed the Volga, overran the Russian steppes, and reduced Moscow to ashes in 1238. Proud and beautiful Kiev was soon after, in 1240, humbled by their victorious arms. The Hungarians were aware of the approach of the formidable foe, but their internal dissensions, and their troubles with the Kuns and with their king, made them forget the imminence of the danger that menaced them. They indulged, besides, in the hope that the mighty Carpathian mountains would arrest the fierce current in its onward course. But the nation was soon roused from its fancied security and awoke to a dread sense of the true situation. The mournful fate of Kiev, the sufferings of the Polish people, and the threatening language of the embassy sent by Batu Khan, the general of Oktai, the Great Khan, who had been the terror of the Russians, dispelled the illusions of the most sanguine.

The mind of King Béla was beset with anxious thoughts, but his courage did not fail him. Although

it was rather late for efficient military preparations, he labored day and night to put the country into a state of defence against the coming peril. He demolished the forests, and barricaded with the timber thus obtained the Carpathian passes. He invited his adherents to take counsel with him, and called to arms the ecclesiastical and lay lords, the soldiery of the counties, and every man in the country capable of bearing arms. According to ancient custom he caused the bloody sword to be carried about throughout the land. His active zeal was not confined to his realm alone, but, sending his ambassadors to the western courts, he instructed them to beg, admonish, and urge the rulers of the West, in the name of Christianity, to come to his aid. It was all in vain. The foreign courts did not stir, and the Hungarian lords, in their surprise and dismay, instead of devising means to meet the danger, were wildly looking about them for some one to be made responsible for the coming peril, and to serve as a victim of their anger. They turned with passionate hatred upon the king and the Kuns, saying that he with his Kuns should defend the country, and that the king need not count upon them in this emergency. The spring of 1241 was already nearing, and still the royal banner, floating over Pesth, proclaimed to the world the absence of troops and the defencelessness of the country. The Mongolian armies had, meanwhile, already begun to press forward. Their right wing marched on Poland and Silesia, in order to effect an entrance into the country from the northwest; the left wing, passing through Moldavia, ap-

proached the snowy mountains of Transylvania; whilst the army of the centre was led by Batu Khan himself across the northwestern Carpathians to the pass of Bereczke. Thus the two arms of the Mongol armies were preparing to crush, in a deadly embrace, the doomed country.

Batu Khan crossed the Carpathians on the 12th of March, 1241, and, having dispersed the troops of Palatine Héderváry, at the foot of the mountains, the active Mongol cavalry troops overran with such suddenness the plain watered by the Theiss, that four days later the smoke of the burning villages, set on fire by the ruthless enemy, could be discerned from the walls of Pesth. The Hungarian lords, even at this critical moment, failed to arrive with their contingents, and those who were under arms near Pesth nursed their wrath, not against the enemy, but against the hated Kun immigrants whom they denounced as the spies and allies of the Mongols, and as traitors to Hungary. They rushed upon the unsuspecting Kuns with savage rage, massacring their king, Kuthen, together with his household, at his quarters in Pesth. The Kuns, incensed at this treachery, were not slow to retaliate. One portion of them left the country, killing, burning, and devastating every thing before them, whilst the other joined the Mongols in order to avenge more thoroughly their unjust persecution.

Towards the latter end of March, Béla, inspired by despair rather than by any hope of success, led the royal army which had gathered around Pesth, and numbered altogether from 50,000 to 60,000 warriors,

against the Mongols. This scanty force was all that the Hungarian nation, shorn of its valor and sadly wanting in public spirit, opposed to the invading enemy. The Mongol army retreated before Béla as far as the Theiss, and there Batu Khan, falling back with both wings of his army, pitched his camp in the angle formed by the Sajó and the Theiss. King Béla was intent upon reaching the same point, and placed his forces on the plain extending along the right bank of the Sajó, opposite the Mongol camp. Here on the plain of Muhi took place the dreadful conflict between the two armies. From the dawn of day to late in the night lasted the bloody engagement which ended with the complete annihilation of the Hungarian army. On the fated battle-field perished the chief prelates of the church, the highest dignitaries of the state taken from the ranks of the best patriots, thousands of the gentry, and the hope and last prop of the nation, her only army. Only few amongst those who did not fall amidst the shock of battle could escape with their lives. The pursuing enemy was everywhere close upon the track of the fugitives. "During a march of two days," says Rogerius, a contemporary writer, who had been an eye-witness of these horrors, "thou couldst see nothing along the roads but fallen warriors. Their dead bodies were lying about like stones in a quarry."

Yet, amidst all these misfortunes, there was one gleam of comfort in store for the nation. Every thing, indeed, was lost, but her king was saved, and whilst he lived the nation still kept up her hopes and

faith in a better future. A few devoted followers had rescued Béla from the perils of the bloody engagement near the banks of the Sajó, and the fugitive king, wandering for a while amidst the mountains of Upper Hungary, finally arrived at the court of Frederic, Duke of Austria, to whom he had previously sent his family and royal treasures. Here, however, instead of meeting with hospitality, he was made prisoner, and succeeded in regaining his freedom only by abandoning to his avaricious neighbor, who turned Béla's misfortunes to his profit, his treasures, his crown, and the possession of three counties. Béla then sent his family to the Dalmatian sea-shore, whilst he himself hurried back to his unfortunate land, to the region near the Drave, in order to save what could yet be saved. The Danube alone interfered with the further advance of the Mongols. Two thirds of the realm had already fallen a prey to the fierce rage, greed, and brutal passions of the enemy. Whilst the Mongol Khan was dividing one half of the country, as conquered territory, into hundredths and tenths, and the people, lured from their hiding-places, lowered their necks, terror-stricken under the new yoke, Béla collected anew an army in the western part of the realm, and despatched ambassadors to the rulers of the western states. But before he could yet see the results of his renewed exertions, the severity of the winter, by covering the Danube with ice, afforded the Mongols an opportunity to penetrate into the western half of the country. The places which guarded the most sacred memorials of Hungarian royalty and Christi-

anity, became a mass of smouldering ruins. The waves of the Mongolian inundation closed now upon the entire land. Béla was again compelled to seek safety in flight, and, mistrusting the continent, he sought a refuge near the sea. He retired, together with his family, first to Spalato, and subsequently to his fortified castle Trau, which was defended on almost every side by the sea. But his pursuers, who seemed to look upon their victories as incomplete as long as the king was not in their power, were on his track even there, and, devastating the sea-shore, as far as Ragusa, they, at last, desperate with rage, laid siege to Trau.

The last hopes of the nation had centred upon the sea-fortress, and now these hopes, too, seemed to vanish, when suddenly, as by a miracle, the besiegers ceased their hostilities, folded up their tents, and departed for the East. At the command of Batu Khan the whole Mongolian army, with all their followers, left the razed country, the flood of the invaders receding to the banks of the Volga, whence it had come. Oktai, the Great Khan, was dead, and Batu Khan hurried back to be present at the funeral feast, and to make his powerful voice, emphasized by the arms of his entire army, felt in the election of the new ruler.

After the Mongols had withdrawn, King Béla returned, in company of a few of his trusty followers, to his desolated land. He tottered under the weight of the misfortunes and woes of his people. To use the words of a contemporary writer and eye-witness describing the scene of desolation which met Béla's

eyes "Here and there a tower, half burnt and blackened by smoke, and rearing its head towards the sky, like a mourning flag over a funereal monument, indicated the direction in which they were to advance The highways were overgrown with grass, the fields white with bleaching bones, and not a living soul came out to meet them And the deeper they penetrated into the land, the more terrible became the sights they saw. When at last those who survived crept forth from their hiding-places, half of them fell victims to wild animals, starvation, and pestilence The stores laid up by the tillers of the soil, the year before, had been carried away by the Mongols, and the little grain they could sow after the departure of the enemy had hardly sprung up when it was devoured by locusts The famine assumed such frightful proportions that starving people, in their frenzy, killed each other, and it happened that men would bring to market human flesh for sale Since the birth of Christ no country has ever been overwhelmed by such misery '

Great deeds spring up in noble souls harrowed by misfortune Bela showed himself greatest in the extreme misery of his nation In order to relieve the wants of the people and to enable them to till the soil, he caused to be imported seed for sowing and draught cattle from the neigboring countries He colonized with new inhabitants the depopulated regions, held out inducements to German artisans, miners, and traders to settle in towns, and invited again the Kuns, who were roaming in the regions of the Lower Danube, to return to their former habita-

143 BELA IV RETURNS TO HIS COUNTRY DEVASTATED BY THE MONGOLS

tions on the rich lands of the Theiss. He bestowed especial care upon the cities, founded new ones, and granted additional privileges to the old ones. He was also the founder of Buda, which stands to this day. He ordered the larger cities to be surrounded by walls, caused forts, built of stone, to be erected in the neighborhood of more important roads, and encouraged the great lords to build similar forts. He was careful to guard the eastern frontiers, but remembering that the durability of the internal order was as powerful a support of the security of the land as well defended frontiers, he was bent upon making the laws respected. Hardly five years had passed since Béla engaged in his arduous task, and already the country recuperated to such an extent that the nation could receive with composure the news that the Mongols were making fresh preparations for a second attack, and was even, for years, able to turn the weight of her whole power against the Western states.

The nation which stood in such great need of peace, was unfortunately doomed never to enjoy its blessings. Béla himself, as soon as he had gained sufficient strength, deemed it his first duty to punish Frederic, the faithless Austrian duke, and to recover the treasures retained by the latter's treachery. The war between the two neighbors began in 1246. The contest in itself was of no great significance but its consequences were highly important. Béla achieved, with the help of his Kun warriors, a complete triumph over Frederic, who lost his life on the battle-field. Frederic was the last of the

Babenberg line, and the inheritance of the Babenbergs, the Austrian principalities, were, through his death, left without a master. Béla coveted for himself the masterless countries, but was opposed in his schemes in that direction by Ottokar, the powerful king of Bohemia, who then already labored for the realization of his ambitious dream, the founding of a great Slavic empire. The Hungarian king could not expose his country to the dangers involved in the erection of such a Slavic empire along the western borders, and was therefore opposed, from the beginning, to Ottokar's aspirations. The contest between Hungary and Bohemia was at first waged for the Babenberg possessions, but its original cause was lost sight of, and the war continued for many years, to terminate only with the overthrow of Ottokar and the ruin of his empire. Béla was engaged in these wars during the last years of his reign, and they were continued by his son Stephen V., and his grandson Ladislaus IV.

These wars brought into a community of interests the kings of the house of Árpád and the Hapsburgs, whose first great ancestor, Rudolph, ascended in 1273, the German imperial throne, the stability of which was endangered by Ottokar. The latter had seceded from the German empire, and was now building up at its expense his own great Slavic kingdom. It was quite natural, therefore, that Ladislaus IV., King of Hungary, and Rudolph of Hapsburg, should enter into an armed alliance for the purpose of combating the common enemy, who, confident in his power, threatened both his eastern and his western

neighbor. Twice they led their joint armies against Ottokar, and, at last, in the course of the second campaign in 1278, they completely routed the Czech armies near Stillfried and Diernkrut in the plain of the Morava, or March. Side by side with Rudolph's ten thousand men fought forty thousand Kun warriorsa gainst Ottokar, the preponderance of the Hungarian arms securing at last the triumph of the allies. Ottokar's power was overthrown and he himself fell, buried beneath the ruins of his kingdom. Rudolph strengthened the German throne, whose fate the events of subsequent centuries closely identified with that of his family, and the Austrian principalities became the hereditary provinces of the Hapsburgs. Hungary derived but an unequal benefit from this triumph. To be sure the gratitude of the ally, freed from a formidable enemy, was fervent, and his vows of friendship (not always respected by his successors) most earnest. Thus Rudolph writes to Ladislaus IV.: "Tongue cannot tell, nor pen describe, the immense joy we feel at your having risen with so powerful a force to avenge our common injuries. Wherefore, glorifying God, we express the greatest gratitude of which we are capable to your Majesty, and loudly promise that no vicissitude shall shake us in the indissoluble alliance which we have vowed to you." The booty, gratifying the avarice of a few and the vanity of the nation, could also hardly be reckoned a solid advantage. One important result accrued, undoubtedly by the triumph of the allies, also to Hungary, in the destruction of Ottokar's Slavic kingdom. In other respects the victory

proved rather a disadvantage, for, instead of strengthening the power of the state, it relieved the minds of the powerful lords in the land, who now, freed from anxiety, once more indulged their self-seeking propensities, and labored to ruin the country.

Ladislaus IV. (1272–1290) not only did not possess the qualities which might have enabled him to oppose the corruption of his age, but, by his levity, undermined even the last remnant of the royal authority which had become more and more feeble in the course of the last century. The king, unmindful of his crown, and indifferent to the interests of the nation, deserted his ancestral court, and, pitching his residence amongst the tents of the Kuns, passed there his life in the society of his boon companions in riotous living and revels, destructive alike of his dignity as a man and king, and detrimental to the hopes of the nation. The great of the land imitated the example set by their king. They were led exclusively by their insatiate self-indulgence, and neither the law of the land nor the commands of the Church, the voice of faith or morality, could prevail upon them to respect themselves, and to have regard for the rights of others. The weak became the victims of the strong, and the most powerful were making preparations to divide amongst themselves the masterless and defenceless country. The Brebiris along the sea-shore, the Németujváris beyond the Danube, the Csák family in the regions of the Vág, and the Apors in Transylvania, were in reality the little kings of the country. They broke off a piece from the domain of St. Stephen whenever it

suited them, and of the size they wanted. They let their troops loose upon the people, and carried on wars in their own way with one another, and with the neighbors. And if any thing escaped the greed of the oligarchs, it fell into the hands of the Kuns, who, trusting in the protection and favor of the king, plundered and devasted the land like marauding armies. "Then descended," says the chronicler, "Hungary from the grandeur of her glory. Owing to the domestic wars the cities became deserted and the villages reduced to ashes, peace and harmony were trampled upon, the wealthy became impoverished, and the nobles, in their misery, turned peasants. It was at this period that the two-wheeled cart got the name of St. Ladislaus' wagon, for owing to the universal plundering of the draught-cattle, the number of the latter had decreased to such an extent that people were compelled to draw these carts themselves."

The country before long, however, was free from the misrule of Ladislaus, but his death did not extricate it from the misery into which he had plunged it. A number of Kun youths, apparently from motives of private vengeance, assassinated him in his tent. The death of Ladislaus became a new source of trouble to the country, for there was now but one male descendant of the house of Árpád to ascend the throne, Duke Andrew, the grandson of Andrew II., the king who had given the Golden Bull to the Hungarians. Stephen, the father of Duke Andrew, had left Hungary early in life, and, settling in Venice, married there Tomasina Morozzoni, a lady descended from a distinguished patrician family.

Andrew III. (1290–1301), the last king of Hungary of the Árpád line, was born in Venice, where he received his education and remained until he attained the age of manhood. Hitherto he had lived entirely a stranger to the events which had plunged the country with rapid strides into the uttermost misery. There were many within the land, and among the neighbors abroad, who did not look upon him as a genuine Hungarian and who refused to acknowledge his right to the inheritance of the Árpáds. During his brief reign he gave, nevertheless, ample proofs of possessing abilities befitting an eminent ruler, and no blame can attach to him for having been unable with his inadequate strength and power to contend against the difficulties of that period. To put down the little kings in the country, and to keep away from the borders those foreign powers who, under the pretence of kinship and led by unblushing avariciousness, announced their claims to the inheritance at this early date, was a task to which Andrew III. was not equal. But he struggled bravely and manfully against the difficulties that beset his royal path. He opposed to the oligarchs the gentry, whose ancient immunities he confirmed, and whom he attached to his person by granting them new ones. Duke Albert of Austria, the son of Rudolph of Hapsburg, who was the first to claim the throne, was driven from the country, but the diplomacy of Andrew turned him subsequently from an enemy into a friend and ally. He entered upon the contest with the Neapolitan Anjous, who, being the descendants in the female line of the Árpáds, were the

most pressing and determined claimants to the throne. But at the very outset of the struggle, when the shock of the collision of hostile interests is generally most severe, and just as Andrew was preparing to enter upon the campaign against Charles Robert of Naples, death suddenly took him in 1301. The chronicles contain traces of a suspicion that he died by poison administered by his Italian cook, who had been hired for that foul purpose by the Neapolitan party, and that thus, the doom of the house of Árpád was sealed by the wiles of an assassin. The sun of the Árpáds set amidst dark and storm-portending clouds, and the new dynasty of Anjou inherited the great task of reconciling the oligarchs with the gentry, and both classes with the crown, and thus of restoring the ancient power and splendor of the Hungarian kingdom.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ANJOUS IN HUNGARY.

THE male line of the house of Árpád became extinct by the death of Andrew III. His only daughter, Elizabeth, retired to a convent, and the nation was once more called upon to exercise its ancient right of electing a king, and three candidates, a Czech, a German, and an Italian, at once came into the field. Each of these claimants had a party in the country, and not until the strength of the nation had been wasted by internal strife and warfare during a period of eight years did the Italian party succeed in placing on the throne Charles Robert, who became the founder of the Hungarian Anjous. It will be our task now to relate how the newly elected ruler, taking the reins of government into his own hands, introduced into the country the glorious era of chivalry. Under the reign of the Anjous we shall see the culture and customs of Western Europe gradually taking root in Hungarian soil, the name of Hungary becoming the object of respect and admiration abroad, the boundaries of the kingdom extended by a powerful hand, the crown of a brave and chivalrous neighbor, the Polish nation, placed upon the brows of the Hungarian king, until, at last, as

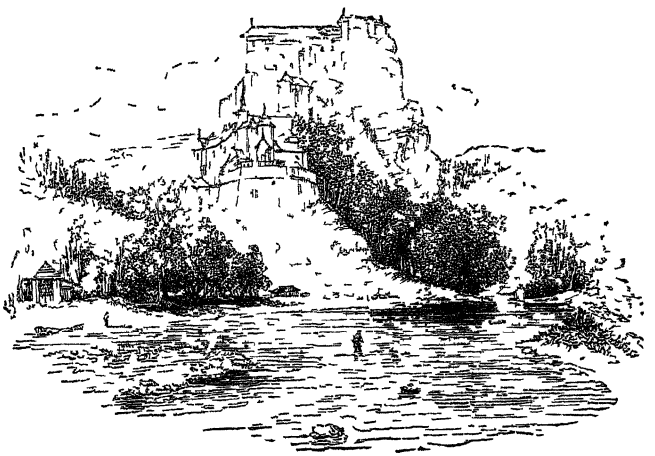
the Hungarian poet Bajza sings, "the shores of three seas formed the frontier walls of the kingdom."

At first the Czech party was victorious. Wenceslaus, the aged king of the Czechs, who, through the female line, was related to the house of Árpád, not feeling equal to the task of governing Hungary himself, offered to his party, in his place, his son and namesake, who was but thirteen years old. On the 27th of August, 1301, at Stuhlweissenburg the sacred crown of St. Stephen was placed on the head of young Wenceslaus; but his reign was of short duration. The curse of the Church of Rome was pronounced against his partisans, but the citizens of Buda were little affected by this interdict, and caused the curse to be hurled back on the anathematizers by their own prelates. Yet the party of the boy-king grew so weak that his father deemed it advisable to recall him home. Wenceslaus the elder entered Hungary, pillaged the wealthier cathedrals, and expressed but one wish concerning his son—to see him for once attired in the royal Hungarian robes. His adherents complied with the wish of the old king, and, dressed in the royal robes and bearing the crown on his head, young Wenceslaus proceeded homeward, surrounded by his soldiers and under the protection of armed body-guards.

The Italian party, intent upon avenging this affront, invaded the territory of the Czechs, and by frightful massacres made the people atone for the abduction of the king. The fierce Kuns, or Cumans, throwing Czech children, strung together by means of holes bored through the palms of their hands, across their

saddlebows, wildly tore through the land, devastating every thing. Very soon Albert, emperor of Germany, with Otto the Bavarian, came to the rescue of Wenceslaus, who, grateful for their assistance, delivered the crown to Otto.

The German party, in their turn, were now victorious, and obtained possession of the crown of St. Stephen, the most sacred relic of the nation. Otto



CASTLE OF ÁRVA

marched into the country, but under the auspices of a bad omen. The crown was, through some accident, lost on the road, although his attendants discovered it afterwards, buried in the mire. Otto, whose vanity prompted him to display, marched in a procession through the capital, Buda, adorned with all the paraphernalia of royalty, and from that day on, every king succeeding him has, after the coronation, re-

peated this special pageant. Otto was as much the shadow of a king as Wenceslaus had been before him. In order to consolidate his power he asked in marriage the daughter of the most powerful Hungarian lord, Ladislaus Apor, the *vayvode* of Transylvania. Receiving a favorable reply, he hastened, full of hope, to Transylvania, but on his arrival was thrown into prison by the wily vayvode. After his liberation, which took place soon afterward, he turned his back for ever upon Hungary, and was satisfied with the empty title of King of Hungary. The crown, however, remained in the possession of the vayvode.

The Italian party were now left masters of the field. The most obstinate and uncontrollable oligarchs were by this time tired of the disorders prevailing in the country, and all combined with a hearty good-will to place Charles Robert, of Anjou, upon the throne of Árpád. On the 27th of August, 1310, Charles Robert was crowned for the fourth time, but in this instance with the sacred crown, which had been at length obtained from Apor. Charles was now the lawful king (1309–1342), and could, without interference, set about the task of restoring order in the country, a work to which he proved fully equal.

The king had many difficulties in his way. The ruler *de facto* and *de jure* could call but a small portion of the kingdom really his own. The endless dividing up of the territory, which was characteristic of Germany at the close of the last century, was to be found in miniature also in Hungary. The dis-

orders prevailing under the rule of the last Árpád, and of the two kings succeeding him, had encouraged the lawlessness of the marauding nobles. Every one appropriated as much territory as he could, and exercised royal or princely authority in the domains thus acquired by him. While so many had become the possessors of large estates, the king was without any personal patrimony. These little kings had to be reduced, one by one, to submission, and deprived of the usurped lands. The most powerful of them was Matthias Csák of Trencsén, and his subjection gave the greatest trouble, and consumed the most time.

The power and territory of Matthias Csák extended from the Northwestern Carpathians to the Theiss and Danube. The castle of Trencsén was the seat of this petty king. From this fortified castle on the Vág, built on a rocky eminence near the commercial road leading from Silesia to Hungary, he was in the habit of sending his marauders to devastate the neighboring country. He pounced like a bird of prey from his rocky nest upon the unwary merchants who were passing with their ships below, and the poor traders esteemed themselves fortunate if they got safely off by leaving a portion of their wares in the freebooter's hands. The plunder thus got together enabled him to display royal pomp, and such was the dazzling sumptuousness and luxury exhibited at his castle that, compared to it, the king's palace seemed to be but a poor hut. Csák had his own palatine treasurer and other officers of high rank, and when he went about he was attended by an escort of

several thousand armed men. It was only after a good deal of solicitation that Csak consented to receive the Pope's legate, Cardinal Gentilis, and even then the legate had to meet Csák at the place specified by the latter, who wished this church dignitary to understand that he should feel highly honored by being permitted to shake his hand.

In the beginning, Csák seemed to submit to Charles, and, swearing fealty to the king, he consented to be represented at the third coronation. In order to win Csák's friendship and support, Charles made him the *Guardian of the Land.* But this new honor did not prevent him from very soon becoming weary of his subordinate position, and when a law had been passed ordering the restitution of the royal castles and domains which had come into the possession of subjects or strangers, his wish to be independent became even greater than before. An armed contest soon ensued between the king and his powerful subject. It was preceded, however, by a papal excommunication of Csák and his adherents, extending even to the dead, but the impious rebel retorted by laying waste the lands of the neighboring high prelates. Csák's power stood at that time at its height. He was the master of a domain containing over thirty fortified castles, which, to this day, is called by the people, after him, Matthias Land, and it was quite natural that the king was reluctant to beard the lion in his own den. The king's troops first entered the territory of Szepes, hoping to find there the weak point of the antagonist, but they were compelled to retreat before the

captains of Csák. The decisive battle took place in 1312, north of the town of Kassa. The engagement was sharp and bloody, and terminated in the defeat of Csák's men. The ancestors of the Báthorys, Tököly s, Drugets, and Széchenyis, who were amongst the most powerful families in Hungary, fought on this occasion by the side of the king. Although humbled, Csák's power was not greatly impaired, for we find him, a few years later, strong and bold enough to attack John, king of Bohemia, and take from him the fortified castle of Holics.

Charles Robert then turned his attention to his other rebellious subjects, reducing them to submission, one by one, leaving Csak to be dealt with by Providence. He had not, however, to wait very long, for in 1321 this great lord died. The manner of his death is described to have been frightful. Worms generated by his own body consumed him slowly. There was no one after his death to inherit his vast estates and with them his great power. Matthias Land was divided up in smaller sections, and distributed amongst the king's favorites. The subjects of Csák, amongst them his palatine Felician Zách, submitted at once to the king.

The king's attention was too much engaged by this domestic warfare to allow him, while it lasted, to display the energy which marked the subsequent years of his reign, an energy which was destined to make Hungary an influential power in Central Europe. During these days of civil strife he had his seat in Temesvár, and his household was so little befitting royalty that its poverty frequently elicited the com-

plaints of the higher clergy. But matters quietly changed when Charles transferred his residence to Visegrád, the royal palace to which cling so many fond and sad national memories, and which in our days still, though in ruins, looms up on the right bank of the Danube as a monument of Hungary's ancient power and glory. Charles was full of ambitious schemes to raise his family to the greatest possible power, and the extension of the power of Hungary was deemed by him to be the readiest means of accomplishing this aim. First of all he stood in need of money and soldiers, but his genius enabled him to procure both. He exploited the rich mines of the country, and raised the commerce and industry of the realm to a flourishing condition, and the wealth of the people increased to such an extent that he felt warranted in levying direct taxes, a mode of taxation which had before been entirely unknown in Hungary. The manner in which he created an army bears witness to his ingenuity. The county system had become so loose and disorganized that no soldiers could be expected from that source. He had to look for them in another quarter. Charles knew, very well, the chivalrous disposition of the nation, which, in the matter of display, had still preserved its Oriental character; he knew, too, from history, that those who appealed to the vanity of the Hungarian were never disappointed, and he laid his plans accordingly. He transplanted into Hungary one of the graceful institutions of Western Europe, that of chivalry. Knights there were in the country, but they were not numer-

ous and had not proved to be enthusiastic adherents of the king. Charles understood how to win the affections of the great lords; he distributed coats-of-arms and founded orders. In the wide courts of the castle of Visegrád, knightly tournaments became frequent, and the new knights, with their fresh heraldic devices, had an opportunity of meeting each other in armed combat in the presence of their foreign king. The king's court came to be the resort of noble youths, and boys of noble descent became the playmates of the royal princes. In order to rouse the warlike spirit of his great nobles, he allowed those of them who joined in a campaign with a certain number of soldiers, to lead their men under banners bearing their own armorial devices.

An event, however, of most tragic issue, which has furnished a fruitful theme to Hungarian poets and artists, almost overthrew the effect of the king's wise policy and endangered his life. The scene of the occurrence, which took place on the 17th of April, 1330, was the magnificent palace of Visegrád. The former palatine of Csák, Felician Zách, had become one of the king's chief councillors, and he, with his daughter Clara, one of the queen's maids of honor, a lady of extraordinary beauty, resided in the king's palace. Casimir, the King of Poland, and the queen's brother, was at the time a guest at Visegrád, and during his stay there, behaved improperly towards Clara Zách. The infuriated father, on learning this, broke in upon the royal family sitting in the dining-hall, and intent upon avenging the affront offered to his daughter, threatened every one

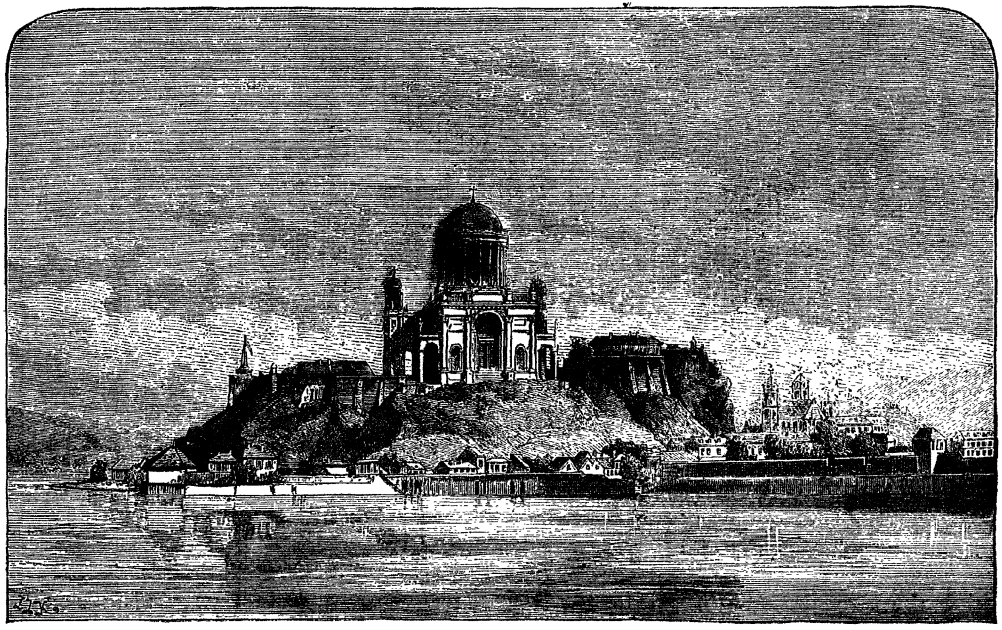
in his way. He fell with sword drawn upon the royal children and their parents. The children remained unhurt, but the king was seriously wounded, and the queen had four of her fingers cut off. John Cselényi, the queen's treasurer, finally rushed to the rescue and felled the exasperated father with his bronze pole-axe to the ground, and the alarmed servants, who had meanwhile hastened to the hall, gave the miserable man, in presence of the royal family, the *coup de grace*. A frightful and most cruel punishment was inflicted, for her father's bloody act, on the unhappy Clara and all the members of the Zách family. The maiden's ears, nose, lips, and hands were cut off, and in this condition she was tied, together with her brother, to a horse's tail, and dragged through the land until both died a miserable death. The Zách family were exterminated to the third degree, and the remoter kinspeople doomed to slavery. Such a sentence upon those who had committed no crime was a most vindictive and savage one, and the people saw the avenging finger of God in the results of the unhappy campaign of that year against the Wallachians. One of the chronicles, referring to the disastrous issue of the war, says: "The king had hitherto sailed under favorable signs, and cut, according to his heart's desire, through the stormy waves with the ship of his fortune. But changeable fortune had now turned her back upon him. His army had been defeated, and he himself is suffering tortures from his gouty hands and feet."

Ban Michael Bazarád, then the ruler of Wallachia, dared to ignore his dependence on the crown of

Hungary. Charles eagerly seized the opportunity to punish the traitorous vassal, and hoped, at the same time, that the indignation of the people against him for his cruelty would subside at the news of a victorious campaign against the Wallachians. Declining the offers of peace made by the repentant ban, Charles boldly advanced, with his spirited knights, over the impassable and unfamiliar roads of Wallachia. He had penetrated so far into the land that his further advance was rendered impossible by the absence of any road, and he was determined to retrace his steps. The Hungarian army was led astray by the Wallachian guides, and in retreating found itself quite unexpectedly hemmed in between steep and towering rocks from which there was no outlet. A shower of stones descended on their heads; the Wallachians who occupied the heights sent down dense volleys of rocks and arrows upon the doomed Hungarians. Charles himself owed his escape to the generous devotion of Desiderius Szécsi, one of his men, with whom he changed dresses. This brave warrior sealed his devotion with his life. The enraged Wallachians, mistaking him for the king, attacked him from every side, and after valiantly resisting, he finally fell on the battle-field. His sovereign escaped in safety, and Wallachia maintained her independence.

Charles, upon his return home, once more busied himself with the carrying out of his ambitious schemes for the aggrandizement of his family, and the results of his efforts gave ample proof of his political sagacity. He acquired for his family both Naples

and Poland, although as yet on paper only. Poland became only under his son Louis the undoubted possession of the Hungarian king, while Naples never came under his control. In 1335 Visegrád resounded incessantly with the din of feasting and merrymaking; never before nor afterwards were so many royal guests harbored within its stately walls. There were Casimir, become King of Poland, the last descendant of the Piast family; John, the adventurous King of the Czechs, who subsequently died the death of a hero on the field of Crécy; his son Charles, the Margrave of Moravia, and subsequently Emperor of Germany; three knights of the first class belonging to the order of German Knights; the dukes of Saxony and Liegnitz, and numerous church and lay magnates. The entertainment of so many distinguished guests constituted a heavy draft on the royal treasury. A contemporary chronicler states that "fifteen hundred loaves of bread and one hundred and eighty flasks of wine were needed daily for the court of the king of Poland." Whilst the guests were feasting, Charles employed all his ingenuity in shaping the destinies of Eastern Europe. His negotiations with Casimir, the King of Poland, resulted in an agreement that Poland should descend, after his death, to Louis, the son of Charles. Two years later Charles had the satisfaction of learning that the Polish nation had confirmed the private arrangement, and had acknowledged the right of his son's succession to the throne of Poland. One of the finest monuments of Hungarian mediæval architecture, the cathedral in Kassa,



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owed its completion to this welcome news. Queen Elizabeth ordered it to be completed in her joy at the elevation of her son Louis. Charles had also tried to secure Naples for his son Andrew, by having him betrothed, at the age of six, to Joanna, the grand-daughter and heir of the king of Naples. In July, 1333, the young prince proceeded to Naples to take possession of his kingdom, as his father thought, but in reality, as subsequent events proved, to the place of his destruction. Charles died at a not very advanced age, having brought most of his plans to a successful issue in his lifetime.

Six days after his death the crown of Hungary was placed upon the head of his son Louis, afterwards surnamed the Great, who was then seventeen years old (1342–1382). The young king immediately proceeded on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Ladislaus, the most popular Hungarian king, at Grosswardein. There at his grave he made a sacred vow to govern the Hungarian nation after the example of his great predecessor. From Grosswardein he proceeded to Transylvania to receive the oath of fealty of the son of Michael Bazarád. Hardly returned to his palace at Visegrád, the young king received depressing news regarding his brother at Naples. The young Hungarian prince was looked upon with jealousy by the numerous Italian dukes at the Neapolitan court, who tried by every means to hinder his accession to the throne. His mother, the Hungarian queen, at once hastened, laden with treasure, to Naples, to rescue her son from the machinations of his enemies. The Hungarian money

had its due effect at the papal court, whose vassal Naples was at that time. Queen Elizabeth obtained the assurance that her son Andrew would be crowned, but she returned to Hungary before the ceremony of coronation had taken place. At her departure her mind was filled with evil forebodings, which were but too well justified by coming events. The queen's departure was the signal for fresh intrigues at the Neapolitan court. Philip and Louis of Taranto, the sons of Catharine of Valois, openly insulted the young prince. Joanna wickedly turned from her husband and sided with his enemies. At length the day of the coronation was approaching. Andrew, relying on the power he was soon to wield, warned his enemies that he would avenge the affronts that had been heaped upon him. His enemies were seized with terror upon seeing, at the tournament which took place shortly before the coronation, the axe and noose depicted beneath the arms of Andrew, floating on high on his banner. The imminent danger rendered the intriguing dukes desperate, and they at once determined to put Andrew out of the way. His assassination was resolved upon, and, Joanna giving her assent to the nefarious plan, the young prince was doomed.

On the 18th of September, 1345, the whole court, and amongst them Joanna, proceeded to Aversa, to indulge in the merry pastime of the chase. Andrew was accompanied by his faithful Hungarian nurse, Izolda, who, poor creature, little dreamed that her ward was to be the object of the chase. In the evening the whole company took up their quarters

at the convent of St. Peter. Andrew had just retired to his chamber when a familiar voice called him into the adjoining room, in order to discuss some grave questions. The unsuspecting youth, anticipating no evil, left his chamber, but no sooner had he crossed the threshold when the door was locked behind him by his secretary. The assassins lying in wait fell upon their victim at once and strangled him, his cries for help remaining unheeded. His dead body they then dragged to the balcony and precipitated it into the garden below. Whilst this bloody scene was enacted, Joanna slept soundly, undisturbed by the scuffle at her door, and cries of distress of her husband. She afterwards gave the explanation that she had been put under a spell by a witch.

There was mourning at the castle of Visegrád at the sad tidings. Louis swore dire vengeance, and the nation enthusiastically took up arms to support him. From abroad there arrived but voices of sympathy. The Italian princes offered his armies free transit through their territories; Louis, the excommunicated German Emperor, entered into an alliance with the king; Edward III., the King of England, while condoling with him, spurred him on to revenge; the Pope alone maintained an ominous silence. This time, however, the desire for revenge proved stronger with the king than his reverence for the Pope, and in 1347 the Hungarian army was ready to march. To punish a faithless woman and not to conquer Italy was the object of their expedition, and the Italian princes were glad to afford the king's army every facility to reach the proposed goal.

All the great lords of the realm rallied round the king. A large black flag was carried in front of the Hungarian army and on it was depicted the pale face of Andrew. On two occasions they were led by the king against Naples, and each time he was accompanied by the most distinguished Hungarian families. Michael Kont, Andrew and Stephen Laczfy, with Dionysius, the son of the latter, and a host of others, brought with them their armed trains, by whose mighty blows both Aversa, of mournful memory, and proud Naples were soon reduced. Queen Joanna, with her second husband, Louis of Taranto, escaped beyond the sea. Louis of Durazzo, one of the intriguing dukes who was suspected of having been an accessory to the murder, expiated his crime by being killed after a gay carouse and thrown down from the same balcony which had witnessed the foul deed of the conspirators. Four other dukes were carried to Hungary as prisoners. King Louis himself was always foremost in battle and received grave wounds on more than one occasion. But his chief desire—to punish Joanna—was not gratified and at length he entrusted the Pope with the sentence to be pronounced against her. The Pope, however, declared her innocent of the crime of murder, imputed to her, but mulcted her in a fine of 300,000 ducats as a restitution of the expenditures of the campaign. The chivalrous king spurned the blood-money and left the punishment of guilty Joanna to a more upright judge—to Providence. And Providence dealt more severely with the queenly culprit than the successor to St. Peter's see had done. Charles of

Durazzo, called also Charles the Little, son of Louis of Durazzo, having conquered the throne of Naples, ordered Queen Joanna in 1382, thirty-seven years after the commission of her crime, to be thrown into prison, where she met her death by strangling.

During the Italian campaign Hungary was also called upon to meet another enemy in the East. Roving populations were making constant inroads on the eastern border, harassing the Hungarian inhabitants, who had by this time become accustomed to the peaceful avocations of the husbandman and tradesman. The victorious arms of King Louis soon put an end to those lawless incursions. But one of the most beautiful legends of Hungarian history is connected with one of the campaigns against these marauding populations. Kieystut, the Prince of Lithuania, after having been defeated several years before, broke into Transylvania with an army considerably swelled by the accession of a numerous body of Tartars. The king sent Louis Laczfy, the vayvode of Transylvania, against him, and the brave Székely people followed in his train. But the Hungarian army was small and the issue of the battle remained for a long time doubtful. The legend tells that the news of the peril threatening the Hungarian arms reached Grosswardein, where St. Ladislaus lay buried, and that the heroic saint, leaving his grave, bestrode the bronze horse of his own statue, which stood in the centre of the public square, and hurried off to the relief of his distressed countrymen. The Tartars were struck with the apparition of a warrior "who towered over them

head and shoulders," and above whom was visible the holy Virgin Mary, the patroness of Hungary. The pagans were seized with terror at this sight, and the battle ended in a brilliant victory for the Hungarians.

The arms of the king were no less successful in Servia where he was about "to kindle the light of faith." But the most glorious of his wars was the one carried on against proud Venice, which continued during the greater portion of his reign. Her enemies, especially Genoa, willingly sided with the king of Hungary, and the ultimate result was the utter humiliation of the city of St. Mark. At last, in 1381, one year before the king's death, peace was concluded between the two belligerents, a peace of which the Hungarians had every reason to be proud, for by its terms Dalmatia was unconditionally annexed to Hungary, and Venice herself had to send the Hungarian king, annually on St. Stephen's Day, the 20th of August, a tribute of 7,000 ducats. As an indication of the high esteem in which the name of Hungary was held at that time, it is interesting to learn that foreign rulers sent their children to the Hungarian court to be educated, and the inference is not a strained one that the court of Louis must have been a centre of the European culture and refinement of that day. The spouse selected by the king, Elizabeth, the daughter of Stephen, the Prince of Bosnia, had herself been sent to the court to be trained in courtly accomplishments. At the Hungarian court also, Charles IV., the Emperor of Germany, wooed Anna, the Duchess of Schweidnitz, his

future empress. These two rulers were united by ties of close friendship, until the discontent of the Germans with "the step-father of their country," as they called Charles IV., ripened a scheme to transfer the German crown to the Hungarian king. Although King Louis refused to accept the crown proffered to him, the sting remained, and his imperial friend became his deadly enemy. The emperor persisted in indulging in his unfounded suspicions of the king's good faith, and so far forgot himself as to speak insultingly of the king and his exalted mother. The Hungarian ambassadors at the emperor's court, incensed at the affront done to their master, challenged the emperor to mortal combat. But he cravenly declined to accept the challenge, whereupon they declared war in the name of their king. Louis, who almost worshipped his mother, approved of the proceedings of his ambassadors, and sent the emperor an insulting letter, in which he declared that nothing better might be expected from a drunkard. Very soon a large army of Kuns devastated Moravia, until, at length, after a warfare of several years, the humiliated emperor begged for peace, obtaining the Pope's intercession in his behalf. Peace was at last concluded, and matrimonial alliances were to make it doubly sure. Sigismund, the emperor's son, was betrothed to Mary, the king's daughter.

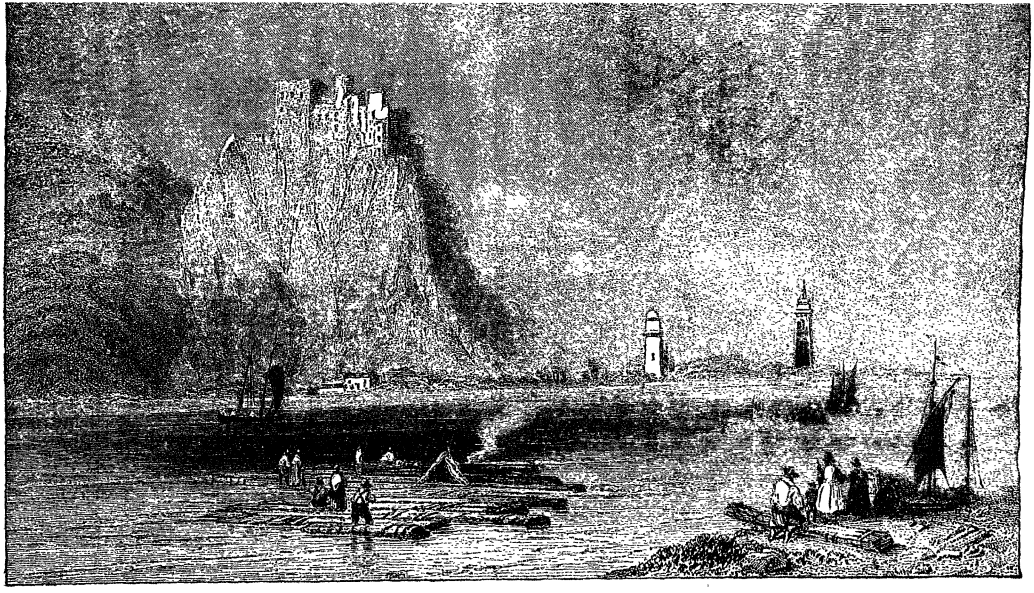
In the latter half of the fourteenth century Christianity in Europe was threatened by a new foe. The warlike followers of Osman had, by the capture of Adrianople firmly laid the foundations of their powerful empire in Europe. Youths, forcibly taken at a

tender age from their Christian parents, and educated afterwards in implicit obedience to the behests of the Sultan, were rigorously trained as soldiers after the most approved fashion of the day, and the troops thus obtained were destined to become the most formidable aid in the building of the Ottoman power in Europe. The Eastern empire had sunk too low, at that time, to be able, single-handed, to resist such a power, and she lost her strongholds, one after the other. In this strait her ruler resorted to one of those deceitful devices characterizing the policy of the Eastern court. John Palæologos, the Eastern emperor, proceeded to the court of the king of Hungary, at Buda, and, promising to give in his adhesion to the Western Church, he asked the aid of Louis against the savage enemy. The "Banner-bearer of the Church," as the king of Hungary was styled by the Pope, deemed it his duty, under these circumstances, to come to the rescue of the distressed emperor, and shortly afterwards the two kindred nations, the Turks and the Hungarians, met in hostile array on the banks of the Maritza. This was the first warlike contest of the two nations. It resulted in the victory of 20,000 Hungarians over a Turkish army four times as large, a victory commemorated to this day by the treasures and appropriate inscriptions still to be seen at the church of Mariazell in Styria.

Casimir, the last Polish king of the house of Piast, died on the 5th of November, 1370. His death was caused by an injury contracted in falling from his horse during the chase.

On the 17th of the same month Louis was crowned King of Poland, at Cracow, by the Archbishop of Gnesen. At the very moment when he was about to reach the goal of the highest ambition of his predecessor, and of himself, Louis seemed to waver, and to doubt the expediency of accepting the crown. He could not help reflecting that governing two nations, which were united by no other tie except his own person, and defending them against their enemies, might prove a task to which one king was not equal. He nevertheless accepted the crown, but his sinister presentiments were fated speedily to be confirmed. The Polish lords were not used to an energetic rule. The nobles of Little and Great Poland were eager, each for themselves, to secure the offices of state, but both equally hated the queen-mother sent there to rule. The country soon fell a prey to internal dissensions and strife, compelling the queen to fly from the land in which a new pretender had appeared. This pretender to the throne was a kinsman of the late king of Poland, and had retired to a convent in France in the lifetime of Casimir. His ambition made him exchange the cassock for armor, and a large portion of the people of Poland very soon acknowledged him to be their king. But his royalty was of short duration; the army of the adventurer was scattered by the adherents of King Louis.

The Lithuanians, whom we have before mentioned as being driven back by Andrew Laczfy, now took advantage of the disorders prevailing in Poland, and succeeded in securing such a foothold in that coun-



CASTLE OF BETZKÓ.

try that one of their dukes, Jagello, who was converted to Christianity, and subsequently married Hedvig, the daughter of King Louis, became in the course of a few years the founder of a new Polish dynasty, the Jagellons, a dynasty of mournful memory in the history of Hungary.

The last days of Louis were embittered by the disorders in Poland. He who had succeeded everywhere else failed there. Disappointment shortened his life; upon returning to Tyrnau on the 11th of September, 1382, from attending the Polish diet convened in Hungary, he was taken ill, and breathed there his last. The Hungarian nation lost in him one of their greatest kings. His reign was stormy but glorious. The Hungarian banner floated always victoriously on his numerous battle-fields, and he humbled the enemies of the nation. In spite of his many wars, Louis found leisure to devote his time to the cultivation of the arts of peace. He gave laws to his country, which secured her permanance, and remained in force up to the most recent ages. He brought order into the affairs of the Church, and into the administration of justice. He was a zealous patron of learning, and established a university at Fünfkirchen (Pécs). His court, the seat of which he fixed at Buda, was brilliant; the Western customs, brought over from Italy, prevailing there. In times of peace magnificent tilts and tournaments at home took the place of the bloody game of war abroad, and the distribution of arms and knightly distinctions introduced by his father continued during his reign on even a larger scale. On all occasions Louis

showed himself to be a brave, wise, and pious king, whose long rule is described by an eminent Hungarian historian as proving "a continued blessing" for his nation.

Dark days succeeded the glorious reign of Louis. The Hungarian nation was eager to testify their gratitude to their great king by a concession made to his dynasty—notwithstanding its foreign origin,—which they had refused to make to the glorious dynasty of the native Árpád family. After the king's death his daughter Mary was proclaimed queen and the crown conferred upon her. But the crown brought little joy to Mary, for the festivities of the coronation were hardly finished when she was menaced by dangers coming from two sides. The Poles hated Sigismund, to whom Mary was affianced, and insisted also that their ruler should live amongst them. Elizabeth, the queen-mother, in order to conciliate the opposition of the Poles, and not to risk the loss of Poland, offered them, as a substitute for Mary, her younger daughter Hedvig. The Poles agreed to this compromise, upon the condition that they should select a husband for Hedvig, their queen. It was a great trial for Hedvig to part from William, Duke of Austria, to whom she was betrothed, but her choice lay between him and the crown of Poland. The allurements of the latter prevailed, and in February, 1386, the Polish nation celebrated the nuptials of their queen with the Lithuanian duke, Jagello, recently converted to Christianity, whom they had chosen for her husband. This marriage put an end to the union of the two countries, and Poland had once more a ruler of her own.

There was greater danger threatening Hungary from the south. The nobles of Croatia were dissatisfied with female rule. There were some ambitious men who were incensed to see themselves excluded from the royal court, whilst a man of low descent, like Garay, the palatine, took the lead there. They were intent upon destroying the government in order to remove the queen. In Charles of Durazzo, who owed the throne of Naples to Louis the Great, they found a man who was willing to become a candidate for the throne of Hungary. The traitors, however, on the appearance in their midst of the energetic Garay, accompanied by the queen and the queen-mother Elizabeth, kept quiet for a while. But no sooner had the royal party left Croatia, when these men, who all owed their honors to the favor of the late king, resumed their machinations, and prevailed upon Charles of Durazzo to perjure himself and to break the oath he had pledged to the late king not to disturb his daughter Mary in the possession of her throne. In 1385, undeterred by the warnings of his wife, he arrived in Croatia.

Meanwhile the marriage of Mary and Sigismund had taken place. The latter, in order to collect an army with which he should be enabled to oppose the advancing enemy and defend the rights of his royal spouse, hypothecated a portion of the country to raise the necessary funds. This ill-timed transaction increased the chances of his opponent, for the nation saw with indignation that Sigismund, in the capacity of "the guardian of the realm" only, without possessing any royal rights, began his guardian-